

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2024

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/D/24/3348082

37-39 Bloomfield Terrace, City of Westminster, London SW1W 8PQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by HRH Hayfa Abdullah Al Saud against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01486/FULL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of extension at ground and first floor level to extend existing annexe building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of an extension at ground and first floor level to extend existing annexe building at 37-39 Bloomfield Terrace, City of Westminster, London SW1W 8PQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/01486/FULL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 0613 (20) 100 Rev C; 0613 (20) 101 Rev C; 0613 A (20) 200 Rev C; 0613 (20) 300 Rev C; and location plan.
 - 3) You must apply for approval of samples of the facing materials you will use, including the windows and doors (drawings 1:5 and 1:20), and elevations and roof plans annotated to show where the materials are to be located. You must not start work on the relevant part of the development until they have been approved in writing. The development must then be carried out using the approved materials.
 - 4) Except for piling, excavation, and demolition work, you must carry out any building work which can be heard at the boundary of the site only: between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; 08.00 and 13.00 on Saturday; and not at all on Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays. You must carry out piling, excavation and demolition work only: between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; and not at all on Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays. Noisy work must not take place outside these hours unless otherwise approved.

Preliminary Matter

2. As the description of development found on the appeal form more accurately reflects the proposal, I have used this instead of the description of development stated on the planning application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the Grade II listed building at 37-39 Bloomfield Terrace and the character or appearance of the Belgravia Conservation Area (BCA).

Reasons

4. The BCA is a large conservation area that extends across a desirable residential area, centred upon the original network of stucco-clad squares and early mid-19th century terraces. The BCA's distinctive character derives from the combination of opulent cream stucco terraces, spacious streets, and verdant garden squares on which these are set. The mews behind the main squares and terraces are more intimate and are characterised by small-scale, modest buildings. The appeal property lies on a secondary street of linked 'villa' type houses that form small streets of small-scale terrace houses of the late 18th century period. These properties have a uniform mass, height, and design, reflecting their origins as workers cottages.
5. Nos 37-39 are laterally connected two-storey Grade II listed buildings with a basement level located within the BCA. The property is used as a single dwelling. No 39 is distinctive due to a later added pediment, which makes it more prominent within the street. To the rear of Nos 37-39 is a guesthouse annexe and a garage. The former is connected to the basement of the host property. Both outbuildings were built after the main house was listed, so they are not part of the listed curtilage according to the Council. I have no reason to disagree with that assessment. However, they are part of the setting of Nos 37-39 which is influenced by the architecture of the area and its historic evolution into a quiet street with secluded verdant gardens.
6. The annexe comprises two parts, one of which is taller than the other. The proposal would modestly increase the height of the taller section while retaining the pitched roof but extend the lower part of the annexe with a flat roof form and reduce its height. Both aspects of the proposal would be subordinate to the host property, and the proposed height increase, and decrease would not harm the relationship. The proposed design and finishes would, subject to the securing satisfactory materials and finishes, respond to the character and appearance of Nos 37-39.
7. The relationship between Nos 37-39 and the annexe would be acceptable, with the annexe not dominating given the size of the associated garden and the form, layout, scale, and massing of nearby development. Ample garden space would remain to the rear. The garden is also enclosed by tall boundary treatment or established landscaping, which means that views of the annexe and the garden are limited to glimpses at best from Ranelagh Grove and Bloomfield Terrace. And, even in those views, the proposal would be seen as a complementary addition to Nos 37-39, its setting, and the BCA.
8. I conclude that the proposal would have a neutral impact on Nos 37-39 and the BCA. Hence, the proposal would not be harmful, and it would preserve the designated heritage assets. Furthermore, the site would be used effectively, a green roof incorporated, and the amount of living accommodation increased at the property despite the existing provision.
9. As such, I conclude that the proposal would accord with Policies 38, 39 and 40 of the City Plan 2019 – 2040 and Policies BEL1 and BEL3 of the Belgravia

Neighbourhood Plan 2023 – 2040. Jointly, among other things, these policies seek new development to be high quality, sustainable and to respond to the character and appearance of the existing area, adjacent buildings and heritage assets, and the materials, scale, height, and massing of development. This is to ensure heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance.

10. There would also be no conflict with sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Conditions

11. An approved plans condition is necessary in the interests of certainty. I have imposed a condition to secure details of the external materials, including details of windows and doors, but I have amalgamated the multiple conditions suggested to achieve this. The condition is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and the BCA. As details of the materials will be submitted to and approved by the Council, a condition requiring matching materials is not necessary. I have imposed a condition in respect of piling, excavation, and demolition work in the interests of neighbouring occupiers living conditions but omitted reference to other legislation as that is not relevant to planning.

Conclusion

12. In addition to my finding on the main issue, I agree with the main parties that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring occupiers living conditions. Therefore, the proposal does not conflict with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR