



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2024

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/W/24/3345723

31 Douro Street, Bow, London E3 2TS

- 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 Fairfield Place Ltd, against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref is PA/23/01820/NC.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single storey upwards extension providing two dwellings (Use Class C3), including private amenity space, cycle parking, refuse/recycling storage, and other ancillary works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters and Main Issues

2. A Unilateral Undertaking has been provided by the appellant that would secure financial contributions towards affordable housing in the borough and other matters. This would meet the requirements of Policy D.SG5 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020) (LP) and the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2021).
3. The Council's second reason for refusal therefore falls away and the main issues are whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and the effect of the proposal on the settings of listed and locally listed buildings.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is situated on the corner between Douro Street and Fairfield Road and is close to the busy junction between the latter and Tredegar Road. It is occupied by a 3-storey building comprising 7 dwellings that was constructed following the grant of planning permission in 2015¹ and subsequent minor amendments in 2017.
5. The site is within the northern part of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area (CA) which is centred around the Bryant and May Match Works Factory and includes 19th century workers' housing. The early housing and industrial heritage are interspersed by more recent housing development which gives the CA a notably mixed overall character and appearance.

¹ Planning application ref: PA/15/00455/A1

6. Directly next to the appeal site, on the other side of Douro Street, is 94 Fairfield Road, a grade II listed, early 19th century, detached 2-storey dwelling. Whilst a relatively diminutive building, No.94 is a key landmark in the CA due to its exposed location next to the road junction. The 2-storey terraced housing to the rear of the site in Douro Street is locally listed and these buildings together with the cobbled street and No.94 make a clear positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. I note that there are tall blocks of flats facing Tredegar Road that are prominent in long views along the main roads and therefore form part of the visual context of the appeal. However, the immediate setting comprises a mix of 2 and 3 storey housing, predominately constructed of brick. In terms of its overall bulk and massing the appeal property sits reasonably comfortably in this context and forms a "bookend" to the neighbouring terraces in Douro Street and Fairfield Road. It also forms a relatively neutral setting for the neighbouring grade II listed dwelling.
8. The proposal would comprise the erection of a single storey roof extension to provide a 2 bedroom flat and studio unit. This would be set back from the building's frontages on the corner and flush with the existing top floor frontages to either side of the corner block. It would be set away from the neighbouring house in Douro Street. The extension would be clad in bronze panels and stone to match the existing frontages below and would incorporate aluminium windows and balustrading.
9. The erection of an additional floor would result in a largely 4-storey building on an exposed corner site that is predominately bounded by, and viewed in the context of, modest 2-storey dwellings. Due its extra height and close vicinity to No.94, the proposal would tower over this listed building further diminishing its already somewhat compromised setting and local landmark role. Similarly, the additional floor would be a prominent, and therefore incongruous element, in views looking along Douro Street.
10. Due to its siting, height and massing the proposal would be an overly prominent and incongruous element in the street scene that would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA and would have an unacceptable effect on the settings of neighbouring listed and locally listed buildings. The harm to these heritage assets would be substantial.
11. For these reasons the proposal fails to accord with LP Policies S.DH1 and S.DH3 and Policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021) which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new development is well designed and preserves character and appearance, including that of heritage assets. There is also conflict with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole

INSPECTOR