



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2024

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/24/3345860

9 Briar Walk, London, SW15 6UD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs T Thomas against the decision of Wandsworth Council.
 - The application Reference is 2024/0207.
 - The development proposed is the raising the main roof ridge by 0.30m, installation of a dormer window to front main roof slope and a dormer extension to rear with French doors and safety balustrade; erection of a hip to gable side roof extension and raising of rear hip roof as a gable and new window to existing rear gable.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a large detached two storey house of Arts & Crafts design with twin bay gables to the front elevation. It is primarily of brick construction with stone detailing and embellishments, painted timber windows and, other than fully across the rear, a pitched, tiled roof. The locality is of established residential character and interesting, generally Arts & Crafts, buildings, generous gardens, established boundaries and a spaciousness which all come together to offer a scene of very pleasing appearance. The appeal proposal is as described above.
 4. The site lies within the West Putney Conservation Area; in the well-defined Putney Park Estate Character Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Policy LP3 of the Wandsworth Local Plan (July 2023) (LP) reflects the importance placed on Conservation Areas.
 5. The scheme includes a front dormer and while one must take the utmost care with such additions, I consider that in this instance it would be acceptable.
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The dormer would be subtle in scale and form, sensibly positioned in the roof span and reflecting the fenestration below, as well as being on a par with many found in the street scene. It would not diminish the qualities of this building whether seen in isolation or with others including the dwelling which was originally of the same design at No. 5. Similarly, and for the same reasons, I would have no criticism of the planned conservation roof windows.

6. Crown roofs are controversial, and often rightly rejected, but there can be occasions when they would be appropriate. This is one such instance to my mind. The roof pitches and scale of the upper and main structure would accommodate a small increase in height and crown roof without an undue top-heavy appearance. The frontage elevation would continue to be the principal focus and the rear roof elevation would be satisfactorily resolved and the period and design of the original dwelling would continue in legibility. The arrangement, if it were even to be noticed, would be comfortably accommodated on the building and assimilated in the streetscene and not out of the ordinary. I say this on the basis that ridge tiles would be predominant and not with construction via the lead overlap approach.
7. I am concerned about the proposed side gable extension. I do not accept the argument that it mirrors the neighbouring structure as a justification on this differently designed property. Notwithstanding that side gable, or others locally, in my opinion it would look contrived and out of place. A key feature of the original property is its (almost) symmetry as a whole and certainly this effect at roof level. The hipped roofs to the side are a key component of this Arts & Crafts design and contribute greatly to the attractive nature of this building. The proposal would be bulky, alien and markedly reduce legibility of the original building form. Despite its set back, and the chimney position, it would register in visual terms.
8. Finally, I am also concerned about the proposed rear dormer extension with its French doors and safety balustrade. This would be an overlarge poorly designed protrusion with excessive scale relative to its context on the building and bearing no sensible relationship to the fenestration or elevation below. The dormer would take no cues from the existing fine building and would look very ill at ease. I appreciate that there are others to be found locally but it does not follow that they represent good quality design. I acknowledge that the edifice would not be seen from the public realm but in a Conservation Area on a building of this inherent quality the fact that it is not widely on view is not justification for approval of patently sub-standard design.
9. As it stands the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the aesthetic qualities of the area. Regrettably this would diminish with the sum of the appeal proposal. An awkwardness and incongruity would arise adversely impacting upon the character, visual and heritage attributes of this dwelling and the local scene.
10. Having regard to the foregoing I conclude that there would be conflict with S72(1) of the Act and LP Policy LP3; there would not be preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Additionally, I conclude that the scheme would run contrary to LP Policies LP1 and LP5. These policies share common themes of seeking to deliver well designed alterations and

development which respects and complements host buildings and wider context through, amongst other things, suitable scale and appearance.

Other matters

11. I sympathise with the wish to enlarge and make use of the roof space of this property. I recognise that thought that has gone into the appeal scheme and the embodiment of, for example, a careful choice of materials and protection of residential amenity for neighbours. I note that no local residents objected to the scheme. I have carefully considered other examples of alterations drawn to my attention but found none to be as a whole comparable to the overall appeal proposal due to the form of the original structure, siting or design detail. I would also deem some of the examples not to be of a quality which should be used as a benchmark for good design. In any event, I must assess this case on its own merits.
12. I have carefully considered all points raised by the Appellants and I conclude that the matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
13. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of the built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; the development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset however what public benefits there would be would not outweigh this harm. Furthermore, there are no other benefits, including to the Appellants, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR