



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2024

by Elaine Benson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/24/3352834

56 St Stephens Road, Hounslow TW3 2BQ

- 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 Mr Y Grewal against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow Council.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/1018.
 - The development proposed is retention of loft conversion alterations relating to side dormer, rear facing first floor window and first floor rear extension height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The Council's concerns relate to the side dormer window element of the proposal. There are no objections to the rear facing first floor window and the height of the first floor rear extension. There are no reasons to disagree.
3. This decision focuses on the matter in dispute and the main issue therefore is the effect of the side dormer window on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the St Stephen's Conservation Area (the Conservation Area) and its effect on the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. In summary and having regard to the St Stephen's Conservation Area Appraisal, I consider that the character of this Conservation Area can be characterised by its good quality late Victorian detached and semi-detached villa-style residential properties on generally spacious plots, together with St Stephen's Church at its north end. The houses display a wide range of architectural styles typical of the late nineteenth century and there is design variety at an individual property level. However, the area's common design features create a cohesive whole and give the area its preserved nineteenth century appearance. The east side of St Stephen's Road has experienced fewer alterations than the west side. Views and focal points within the Conservation Area are long vistas along the tree-lined streets, with some vistas punctuated by the landmark tower of St Stephen's Church.

5. It is important to retain the late Victorian character and appearance of the Conservation Area through sensitive development which preserves the authentic historic character of individual houses, their group and the wider street scene in terms of design and materials. Unsympathetic alterations can harm the overall cohesion of a conservation area.
6. Planning permission was granted by the Council for the 'erection of a rear and side roof extension and a part first floor extension to the rear of the house' in April 2022 (ref 00992/56/P6). Works were not carried out fully in accordance with the planning permission. The appeal application was submitted to regularise matters. Accordingly, the appeal proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for development that has already been carried out.
7. The original planning permission indicated that the side dormer was to be set well within the hipped roof slope, being set down from the ridge and set up from the eaves. However, as constructed, the dormer is taller and narrower, extending down from the roof ridge to close to the eaves line. This has resulted in a disproportionately large, tall and bulky dormer which fails to respect the design and profile of the original roof slope in a subordinate manner. Furthermore, it does not comply with the relevant design guidance set out in the Residential Extension Guidelines SPD (the SPD).
8. Due to its overall scale, design and the extent of its projection from the roof, I conclude that the constructed side roof dormer results in an unsympathetic and visually obtrusive development which harms the overall appearance and proportions of the original house and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The dormer is prominent in the important vista along St Stephen's Road and fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The dormer window harms the significance of the designated heritage asset. I conclude that this harm to significance is less than substantial.
9. In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance, 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.' The height of the dormer was increased to accommodate the height of the occupants of the appeal property, to improve access to the loft, to allow the use of a standard sized door and to enable more of the existing first-floor accommodation to be retained. However, these are private, not public, benefits of the proposal and they do not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. Whilst the current occupiers require additional accommodation, the appeal proposal is not necessary to secure the optimum viable use of the appeal property as a home. In any event, an alternative dormer extension has already been approved.
10. As the appellant notes, dormer windows exist in the street scene, including on the front elevations of nearby houses. Their presence appears to be a factor in the granting of planning permission for the original side dormer window. The principle of a side dormer window on the appeal property is not a matter in dispute. However, the design and location of the constructed dormer window does not reflect other dormer windows within the visual context of the appeal property. But in any event, the appeal proposal has been determined on its own individual merits.

11. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the erected side dormer is contrary to policies CC1 (Context and Character), CC2 (Urban Design and Architecture), CC4 (Heritage), SC7 (Residential Extensions and Alterations) of the adopted Local Plan (2015) and the design guidance within the SPD. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR