
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2024

by Matthew Nunn BA BPI LLB LLM BCL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 January 2025

APP/F5540/Y/24/3347542

20 Woodstock Road, London, W4 1UE

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Three Tigers Holdings Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref: P/2024/0915, dated 17 March 2024, was refused by notice dated 12 June 2024.
 - The works proposed are described as 'listed building consent for installation of a roof window on the existing rear extension; replacement of existing rear window to a door and enlargement of the rear elevation door'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: firstly, whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, No 20 Woodstock Road, and any special features of architectural or historic interest it possesses; and secondly whether the character or appearance of the Bedford Park Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a Grade II listed building located at the junction of Woodstock Road and Rupert Road. The listing description is brief, simply noting of the property: 'upper part tile hung, two single storey bays, porch in angle'. The listing description does not identify the architect, although the Appellant's Heritage Statement mentions that the property appears to be to the design of the leading architect Richard Norman Shaw and built around 1878. This opinion, not disputed by the Council, is based on working drawings by Shaw¹ and the property is one of six similar examples on the estate.
4. The property comprises a mix of brick and tiled elevations, with distinctive gables and white painted multi-paned timber casement windows. According to the Appellant, a rear extension was constructed between 1878 and 1893. This historic addition, long predating the listing in 1970, has been designed to replicate and blend with the style of the original building, including in terms of materials, and includes a double pitched roof and arched multipaned windows and doors. There are decorative barge-boards on the gable end. The interior

¹ Figure 3, Appellant's Heritage Statement

of the property appears to have been modernised from its original form. The special interest and significance of the building derives primarily from its external appearance, especially its high quality architectural composition which externally remains largely intact and unaltered. The significance also derives from its prominent role in the street scene, on a corner plot, as well as having a wider group value with other Grade II listed properties in the vicinity, and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Bedford Park Conservation Area, within which it is located.

5. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies Bedford Park as 'probably the best known and best preserved later Victorian suburb in outer London', serving as a prototype for later garden cities. It was begun in 1875 under the direction of Jonathan Carr, a cloth merchant, using various architects including Shaw, Edward William Godwin, and Edward John May. The Appraisal notes that Bedford Park has long served as a prototype for later garden suburbs and observes that the 'novelty' of Bedford Park is the 'artistically designed' houses of moderate size inspired by the red brick and tiled idiom derived from the home counties vernacular of the 17th and 18th centuries and the Queen Anne revival. The overall design aesthetic of the Conservation Area is a reaction against mid-Victorian ostentation.
6. Many of the properties display 'Arts and Crafts' features including rubbed brick arches and dressings around openings, terracotta embellishments, shaped Dutch gables, tile hung walls, white painted balustrades, and monumental chimneys. Carefully designed front garden walls and fences, as well as hedges, contribute to the character, with a variety of boundaries rather than a consistent approach, providing interest rather than uniformity. The significance of the Conservation Area derives from the architectural merit of the buildings, and the legibility of the housing as cohesive groups within the Bedford Estate. The apparent informality, without formal squares or crescents, creates an intimate character. The appeal building, underpinning and reflecting the area's distinctive townscape, makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
7. The proposal comprises three elements: firstly, the installation of a rooflight on the inner slope of the roof of the rear extension; secondly, the enlargement of a door on the rear elevation of the extension; and thirdly, the replacement of a window with a door on the rear elevation of the house. Importantly, the Appellant has drawn my attention to the recent granting of listed building consent by the Council for 'the insertion of a rooflight into the inner slope of the rear extension' at the property². Given this aspect of the proposal now has consent and is no longer at issue, I have concentrated on the two other elements of the scheme.

Enlargement of door within rear extension

8. At present there are glazed double doors to the garden, with two narrower fixed glazed panes each side. Directly above the central doors is an arched window that projects into the pitched roof. The window and door unit comprises a mix of horizontal, vertical and arched glazing bars. The appeal scheme involves widening the aperture and replacing the existing side fixed glazed panes with two additional sets of double doors. These would replicate

² Ref P/2024/2330 granted on 5 September 2024, Appellant's Final Comments dated 14 October 2024

the existing central doors, so in effect there would be three identical sets of double doors.

9. The Appellant mentions that this alteration is not within the original house. However, as noted above, it involves part of an historic extension dating from the latter part of the 19th century, and long predates the 1970 listing. As noted, the extension very much replicates the 'Arts and Crafts' style of the original building, and can be seen as an intrinsic part of it, as well as forming part of its history. Therefore, the addition contributes to the building's significance.
10. The enlargement of the existing aperture would result in the loss of a small amount of historic fabric. The widened opening would appear somewhat oversized within the rear wall and disrupt the original design of the existing door and associated windows. The significant width of the enlarged door opening would appear disproportionately broad in relation to the arched window above. It would be at odds with the design of the existing apertures in the rear addition to the property, which have a more vertical rather than horizontal emphasis. Overall, I find that the enlarged opening would result in some harm, albeit limited, to the building and some limited loss of significance.

Replacement of window with door

11. The existing opening is a multi-paned casement window with arched glazing bars and a tiled cill below. It is the Appellant's case that, contrary to the Council's view³, there may historically have been an external door at this location rather than a window. This is based on the contention that, according to an old Ordnance Survey map⁴, there appears to have been a glazed structure attached externally to this elevation, as evidenced by the cross hatched notation. The Appellant says this strongly implies an internal access to this glazed structure, and that 'the present window and surrounding brickwork is a rebuild of what was probably a former door'.
12. However, I consider it is equally possible that the addition may have been a small lean-to glazed 'green-house' type structure, accessed externally, but without internal access. This was not an uncommon arrangement. Furthermore, close inspection of the brickwork around the existing window is certainly not definitive in establishing the existence of a door at this location. Therefore, I do not consider that the Appellant's evidence can be determinative on this matter.
13. I acknowledge the attempt by the Appellant to sympathetically replicate the existing design, but with double doors rather than a casement window, with glazed panels either side, and replicating the arched glazing bars above. I also accept these works would be relatively low key and in an unobtrusive position, recessed behind the projecting rear extension. All that said, the removal of brickwork below the opening would result in the loss of a small amount of historic fabric. This would cause a limited degree of harm to the listed building.

³ Council's Delegated Report, Paragraph 5.4

⁴ Appellant's Statement of Case, Figure 2: Ordnance Survey Map 1915, revised 1912, showing cross-hatched addition

Conservation Area

14. I accept that the proposed works to the dwelling would be relatively minor in the context of the whole Conservation Area. Located to the rear of the property, the alterations would not be especially prominent in the Conservation Area, although some limited public views are available from Rupert Road which runs adjacent along the north side. I consider that the listed building and its intrinsic qualities, including the design of the apertures, contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It follows, therefore, that the limited harm I have identified to the listed building means that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would not be preserved in accordance with the relevant legislation⁵.

Planning Balance

15. The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework')⁶ advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation⁷. The Framework further advises that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification⁸. In this case, I find the harm to be less than substantial, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use⁹.
16. In this case, the Appellant has not advanced any specific 'public benefits' in favour of the proposals. This is on the basis that this requirement of the Framework is not engaged because it is said the proposals would not harm the significance of the building. However, in my view, some harm would inevitably arise because of the loss of historic fabric, and the loss of the historic pattern of openings. I acknowledge the Appellant's desire to widen the rear doors and to create an additional door to the garden to suit their personal requirements, but these works would primarily be for the private benefit of the Appellant. The building's current use as a single dwelling, together with the fact that it appears to be in generally sound condition, means that these works would not hold any benefits in securing the building's optimum viable use. Overall, I do not consider that these matters constitute the necessary public benefits that would outweigh the identified harm.
17. In support of this appeal, the Appellant has drawn my attention to works that have been approved at No 48 Woodstock Road¹⁰, specifically highlighting the rooflights inserted in the original roof. I am not familiar with the background to that case. In any event, this aspect of the current appeal scheme has been considered as acceptable by the Council, and now has consent.
18. The relevant legislation requires that, in exercising planning powers in relation to listed buildings, special regard shall be had to preserving the building or its

⁵⁵ S72(1) Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

⁶ Published December 2024

⁷ Paragraph 212 of the Framework

⁸ Paragraph 213 of the Framework

⁹ Paragraph 215 of the Framework

¹⁰ P/2021/4922 & P/2021/4945, Paragraphs 4.12-4.14 of Appellant's Statement of Case

setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses¹¹. In exercising planning powers in conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area¹². Overall, I find that the scheme would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building, and fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the relevant legislation.

19. The proposal would conflict with Policy CC1 (Context and Character) of the Hounslow Local Plan (2015-2030) which seeks to ensure that all new development conserves and takes opportunities to enhance the special qualities and heritage of the borough's places; Policy CC2 (Urban Design and Architecture) which promotes high quality urban design and architecture to create attractive, distinctive and liveable places; and Policy CC4 which requires development proposals to conserve and take opportunities to enhance any heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
20. For the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Nunn

INSPECTOR

¹¹ S16(2) and S66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

¹² S72(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990