



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2024

by H Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/24/3344943

2A Cranbrook Road, Chiswick, Hounslow, London W4 2LH

- 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 Chiswick's Little Explorers Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is 00312/2A/P3.
 - The development proposed is construction of a rooftop extension to existing Children's Nursery
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Prior to the determination of this appeal, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. The substantive matters of the case before me are not however affected thereby. I do not therefore feel any of the main parties' cases would be prejudiced by me proceeding without further consultation thereon.

Background and Main Issues

3. The appeal site lies outside of, but adjacent to, the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area and is prominent in views from within it. The decision notice does not refer to harm to its setting, but this is raised in the Council's officer report and statement of case and the appellants have addressed this point. As such, I am satisfied that the main parties would not be inconvenienced by my decision also doing so.
4. Moreover, Policy CC4 Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (2015) (Local Plan) refers to heritage and states that development affecting a Conservation Area must conserve and take opportunities to enhance the character of the area and respect the grain, scale, form, proportions and materials of the surrounding area. I therefore consider that this policy is relevant to my consideration of the appeal.
5. Accordingly, the main issues are the effect of the proposed development on a) the character and appearance of the area including to the significance of the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area (CA) through development within its setting; and b) the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The host property is a two-storey flat roofed building, set at the back edge of the footway of Cranbrook Road, a short distance from its junction with Chiswick High Road. It lies outside the CA, but its location means it is prominent in views from both streets, including from within the CA. To its south is 2 Cranbrook Road, a two-storey end terrace with accommodation in its roof space. To the north is a single-storey commercial unit, which adjoins a taller building at the junction with Chiswick High Road. Behind the property is the courtyard of 4 Cranbrook Road.
7. Although the surrounding area exhibits a mix of building types, heights and architectural styles, the buildings in Cranbrook Road are generally consistent in their storey heights, and the use of bricks in their construction and pitched roofs with gabled or other featured projections breaking the eaves lines. At the rear, it appears that outriggers and roof additions are commonplace, including at No 2. However, the second-storey outrigger additions referred to, particularly those at 4 and 6 Cranbrook Road were not visible from within the street. Despite these later additions, together with the form and detailing of the roofscape, these features make strong contributions to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. While the host property contrasts with these characteristics, it is of a scale that is lower than the adjoining terrace in Cranbrook Road and shares some similarities with a traditional outrigger. It therefore appears unassuming within the street and does not detract from the CA, as a development within its setting, including in the views to and from Chiswick High Road. Accordingly, it does not undermine how its significance is understood, including as a focus of commercial activity encompassing a consistently high quality of buildings, particularly those fronting Chiswick High Road.
9. The proposal would be a further flat-roofed addition to the host property that would join onto the rear of No 2, to the height of its existing flat-roofed addition. However, that existing roof form is partly concealed behind a parapet, whereas the proposal would highly prominent above the host property. Although the use of zinc cladding would reduce the perception of its scale, it would unacceptably contrast with the simple palette of materials used in the construction of the properties in Cranbrook Road. It would also appear rather solid and box-like, sat atop the roof of the host property, to the extent that it would unduly dominate and be inharmonious with the building and roofscape of the surrounding area. Due to its proximity to the street, and prominence within its surroundings, it would be a significant detractor in the views available out of the CA into Cranbrook Road.
10. I have had regard to the examples of roof extensions near to the site that have been brought to my attention. These are set back further from the front elevation behind a higher parapet wall so are not as prominent in the street scene. Those at 22-26 Cranbrook Road, due to their position on the inside of a bend and some distance from Chiswick High Road, are not as prominent as the appeal proposal. The roof extension at 71 Cranbrook Road is a prominent extension, but it does not provide justification of further development which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The examples are not therefore directly comparable to the appeal proposal, and in any

event, I have determined the appeal on the site-specific circumstances of the case.

11. The harm arising from the proposal, in terms of the approach in the Framework, would be less than substantial. In these circumstances the Framework advises at paragraph 215 that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
12. The proposal would provide additional childcare places, for which there is a local need and support from the sector. It would also provide additional employment opportunities for both construction and nursery staff, as well as improving the quality of nursery accommodation at an existing nursery facility supporting the sustainable use of the site. These benefits attract moderate weight in support of the proposal. I am however unconvinced that these equate to public benefit, sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified, given that this harm carries great weight. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the aims of the Framework in terms of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
13. The proposal would have a significantly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area, including to the significance of the CA through development within its setting. It would conflict with Policies CC1, CC2 and CC4 of the Local Plan which together and amongst other matters seek to ensure that development is of a high-quality urban design and conserves the varied character of the borough.

Living Conditions

14. Even though the number of children attending the nursery may vary on a daily and weekly basis, should the extension go ahead, the maximum number of children allowed to attend on any given day would increase by approximately seven children.
15. The application and appeal were not accompanied by a full noise assessment, but an acoustics review. However, I have had regard to the acoustic reports and acknowledge that there would not be an external terrace.
16. As the number of additional children is limited by the size of the proposed extension and that mitigation measures designed to reduce the noise of the nursery would remain in place, I do not consider that the additional children would lead to a materially detrimental increase the level of noise. In addition, were the appeal to be allowed, given the location of the windows, I see no reason that the additional room proposed could not be subject to mitigation measures, including by limiting how or if they open. Furthermore, the additional children that could attend the nursery would result in a modest increase in drop-offs and pick-ups. This would not cause material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
17. Although the existing door on the rear elevation of the first floor is conditioned to only be opened for maintenance, evidence from interested parties' states that it is opened at other times and when it is open the level of noise and disturbance is detrimental to their living conditions. This matter is for the Council to address if the noise and disturbance is a result of breaches of the conditions.

18. Therefore, subject to a suitable worded condition, the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regard to noise and disturbance. It would comply with Policies CC1, CC2 and EQ5 of the Local Plan which together, and amongst other matters seek to ensure that development considers the impact of noise and mitigates any impacts.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

19. Whilst the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regard to noise and disturbance this would not outweigh the significantly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area, including to the significance of the CA through development within its setting. I have considered the benefits of the scheme in the first main issue. However, it is clear that there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

H Senior

INSPECTOR