
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2025

by R Gee BA (Hons) Dip TP PGCert UD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/25/3359377

175 Sheen Lane, East Sheen, Richmond Upon Thames, London SW14 8LE

- 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 Reeve of Charter Property Development Ltd against the decision of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
 - The application Ref is 24/2924/FUL.
 - The development proposed is external alterations to existing roof including forming 2 no. additional dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site lies within the Sheen Lane (East Sheen) Conservation Area (CA) wherein I have a statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.
3. The information before me indicates that the Richmond Publication (Regulation 19) Local Plan (2023) (PLP) is at an advanced stage of adoption. I therefore attribute weight to the policies in the PLP referred to by the Council.
4. Following submission of the appeal, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024 and updated on 7 February 2025. The parts of the Framework most relevant to the appeal have not substantively changed from the previous version. As a result, I consider that there is no requirement for me to seek further submissions in respect of these matters, and I am satisfied that no party's interests would be prejudiced by my taking this approach.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, designated as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) and whether or not the proposal preserves or enhances the Sheen Lane (East Sheen) Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

6. The appeal property (No 175) comprises a substantial detached property situated within a prominent position at the junction of Sheen Lane and Shrewsbury Avenue.

- It has varied elevations with projecting gables and a prominent corner turret. The principal elevation faces west and has a tile canopy porch.
7. The area mainly consists of residential properties. There is uniformity in the semi-detached and terraced properties, with detached houses of a more individual design, albeit exhibiting a significant amount of architectural detail. The streetscene is punctuated with key focal buildings of different styles and heights fronting Sheen Lane. The variety in the ages and styles of buildings contribute to this significance and comprise a key element of the character and appearance of the CA.
 8. No 175 contributes positively to the variety in architectural form and appearance found within the locality and the historic environment. The appeal property is identified by the Council as a BTM, and I have no reason to reach a different view.
 9. The roofscape is varied, comprising a hipped and valley roof form with various dormers to all sides. The proposed development would add to this already complex roof form, and the partial infilling of the valleys would further erode the legibility of the original roof form. Whilst flat roof dormers are present within the existing roof slope and the wider locality, I do not know the precise circumstances of their existence, nor does this justify granting planning permission in the context of the special attention that must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA as a whole.
 10. The proposed dormer to the northern roof slope would be visible from the public realm, particularly when viewed from Shrewsbury Avenue, and would appear as a prominent, incongruous and bulky addition. The proposed dormer to the southern roof slope faces onto the side of the adjacent property. Nevertheless, it would still be visible in some views from the streetscene. Private views of the dormers would be permissible, and I see no reason why regard should not be given to the harm to the CA from these views.
 11. Whilst existing landscaping may assist in obscuring the appearance of the proposed development landscaping can rarely be relied upon in the long term with regards to its maintenance, retention and survival. In any case, some of this landscaping is in the form of street trees under the control of third parties.
 12. It is not disputed that the proposal would be subservient to the existing roof and would retain the dominance of the tower feature of the appeal property. The external materials of construction could be conditioned to match the existing roof to help assimilate the development into its surroundings. However, these are neutral matters that do not outweigh the harms identified.
 13. For the reasons stated the proposed dormer extensions would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal building and would have a negative impact on the character of the BTM. Therefore, by adversely affecting a building that contributes positively to the CA, I consider the development would cause harm to the CA's significance and would fail to preserve its character and appearance. In terms of the Framework, I find that the appeal proposal would, result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset. I assess the level of harm to be at the lower end of that scale.
 14. Concluding on this matter I find that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the host building and would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA.

Conflict therefore arises with Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan July 2018 (LP) and Policies 28, 29 and 30 of the PLP. Amongst other aspects, these policies seek to ensure that development respects, contributes to and enhances the local environment, that the historic environment is conserved, and the setting of non-designated heritage assets is preserved. It would also be inconsistent with the guidance of the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Documents: House Extensions and External Alterations (2015) and Buildings of Townscape Merit (2015), which collectively seek to guide and promote high quality design.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. As outlined above, I consider that there would be harm to a BTM, a non-designated heritage asset and less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA, a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 215 of the Framework states that in such cases, the harm to designated heritage assets should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 216 states that for non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
16. I have carefully considered the benefits advanced by the appellant, including thermal performance enhancements and improvements to maintenance by reducing leaf fall from gutters. Whilst I do not dispute these benefits, I am not convinced that the appeal proposal is the only means of achieving such benefits.
17. Furthermore, the appellant asserts that the proposal would make the best use of land and increase natural light thereby reducing reliance on artificial lighting. It would also create additional headroom in the existing properties which would provide enhanced living accommodation for occupiers of the accommodation. These benefits weigh in favour of the proposal. However, the information before me does not demonstrate that the proposal would provide such a material enhancement in these respects, compared to the current situation, that they would justify the harm identified to the street scene.
18. Although the harm to heritage assets would be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, I find that the extent of these benefits would be modest and do not outweigh the great weight given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
19. For the reasons set out above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole. With no other material considerations outweighing this conflict, including the Framework, the appeal is dismissed.

R Gee

INSPECTOR