



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 June 2021

by **H Miles BA(hons), MA, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/20/3260613

17 & 17a London Road, Twickenham TW1 3SX

- 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 S Gill against the decision of Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/1563/FUL, dated 7 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey rear extension to create an enlarged two bedroom flat.
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Decision

1. This appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have been presented with amended plans which omit the front elevation from the proposed drawings. The appellant states that changes to the front were not proposed, albeit the drawings on which the Council based its decision showed alterations to the front elevation including to the windows and dormer. In any case, the changes omit parts of the development that the Council consider to be harmful, and would not change the existing appearance of the front elevation. I am therefore satisfied that the parties would not be prejudiced if I were to consider these amended plans. The appeal is therefore assessed on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area (CA), and the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular respect to light and outlook to 19 London Road.

Reasons

Conservation Area

4. The CA derives its significance as a whole from the historic and architectural value of the original village core, river frontage and areas of open space. The commercial centre of the CA, which includes the appeal site, is characterised by commercial uses at ground floor along the main roads and the traditional layout, appearance and materials of the buildings. These elements therefore make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

5. 17 London Road has a commercial frontage at ground floor and is within a short terrace of similar properties with attractive, historic architectural features. To the rear, properties to Holly Road, London Road and King Street back onto an area used for car parking. Many properties in this context have been altered and extended, albeit these extensions are generally modest and low level. Therefore the rear elevations are subservient to the main building frontages. The rear elevation of no 17 is in historic materials and fenestration, incorporates traditional architectural features including a small rear dormer and it also has a modest rear addition, in keeping with this secondary character. In these respects, the host building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. Directly adjacent to 17 London Road is Fraser House, a more modern building which extends some way to the rear. Nevertheless, it is an intended composition, and does not undermine the positive features of the host building set out above.
7. The proposed extension would create a three storey rear addition with a ridge height above the eaves of the main part of the host building. This would result in an extension that would not be subservient to the original property and consequently would result in a harmfully dominant appearance to this rear elevation. Furthermore the rear dormer would increase in width with cladding to the sides of the window. It would be an oversized and incongruous alteration which would disrupt the historic feature of modest dormer windows within this row.
8. The rear extension would be highly visible in the semi-public space of the Holy Lane car park and would be visible from the rear of nearby properties. As such, this harm would be experienced.
9. The Council did not refuse the application on the grounds that it would have a harmful effect on the setting of any listed buildings and I am not presented with any substantive evidence which would lead me to conclude otherwise.
10. Therefore, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Consequently, in this respect, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies LP1 and LP3 of the Local Plan July 2018 (the Local Plan). Together these require high quality design which maintains and enhances the character of the borough and to conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.
11. Policy LP39 of the Local Plan relates to infill, backland and back garden development. Therefore, the policies set out above are more relevant to this main issue
12. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (the Framework) the harm to the CA would be less than substantial. However, the Framework advises that Heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It goes on to require that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
13. The alterations would improve access to the property and would enable changes to improve internal access and better meet building regulations standards and fire safety regulations. However, I am not presented with evidence that the property would currently not satisfy building regulations, has

poor existing access or would not meet fire safety regulations. Consequently, the weight that I afford to these matters as public benefits is limited. On the other hand having regard to my statutory duty I am required to attribute considerable weight and importance to the harm I have found to the CA.

14. Accordingly, taking all the above into account, the limited public benefits would not outweigh the harm to the CA.

Living Conditions

15. The window in dispute is at the first floor in the main elevation of 19 London Road. At my site visit I saw that it appeared to be obscure glazed. The evidence before me is not conclusive as to what room this serves, however, it appears likely to me that it serves a stairwell.
16. Consequently, even if there were a loss of light to this window, given its treatment and likely use of the room, it would not result in a reduction of daylight, sunlight or outlook that would be unacceptably harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
17. Therefore, the proposed development would result in acceptable living conditions for neighbouring occupiers, with particular respect to light and outlook to 19 London Road. As such, in this respect, it would be in accordance with Policy LP8 of the Local Plan which requires a good standard of daylight and sunlight to be achieved in existing properties, amongst other things.

Conclusion

18. Whilst I find the proposed neighbouring living conditions to be acceptable, the lack of harm in this respect is a neutral factor which would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
19. The proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, to indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR