

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 24/1601/HOT

Address: 1 - 2 The Hermitage Richmond

Proposal: ROOF EXTENSION OVER NO.1 & NO.2 THE HERMITAGE, MATCHING NEIGHBOURING EXTENSIONS IN MATERIAL AND FORM.

Comments Made By

Name: Mr. Martin CRIMP

Address: 9 Mount Ararat Road Richmond TW10 6PQ

Comments

Type of comment: Make a general observation

Comment: As a longstanding resident of Richmond Hill, I've always thought of The Hermitage as one of the neighbourhood's most beautiful streets — which is why I feel compelled to make some observations about this proposal to demolish the existing roof and add an extra storey to numbers 1 & 2.

The proposal makes repeated claims that adding this extra storey will “harmonise the townscape” — but regrettably fails to “exhibit a comprehensive understanding of the site and how it relates to its existing context” [see LP 1].

The context (as I understand it) is as follows:

Numbers 1 to 12 The Hermitage, occupying one whole side of the street, form a unique ensemble.

A special feature of this ensemble is that the 4-storey dwellings — numbers 3 to 10 — are deliberately bookended by the 3-storey dwellings that constitute numbers 1 & 2 and 11 & 12. This mirror symmetry — subtly underlined by adding bay windows only to the central block (numbers 5 to 8) — gives this side of the street an exceptional visual lightness and elegance. The 4-storey buildings in the centre give way to the 3-storey buildings at each end, which in turn harmonise with their 3-storey neighbours — Hermitage Lodge at the bottom of the street, and 4 -10 The Vineyard at the top. (Thus London Atelier's suggestion (page 6) that increasing the roof height of 1 & 2 is “in line with” LP2 is puzzling.)

The applicants make 2 arguments to support a proposal which will erase the street's symmetry, upset the roof-height relationship with Hermitage Lodge, as well as turn 1 & 2 themselves into an asymmetric pair.

The first — that Numbers 1 & 2 “lack roof extensions” — is misleading, since, by design, 1 & 2 match 11 & 12 — have done so, I believe, since they were built in the 1860s — and were never intended to be 4-storey dwellings. In other words, they don't “lack” anything. On the contrary, it is this “bookending” which creates the unique visual amenity of the street. London Atelier (page 3) mistakenly believe that other properties in the street have “roof extensions” which set a precedent. As someone who lived in a flat in Number 8 in the 1970s I can assure them that this building always had 4 floors, with, at that time, a separate flat on each floor (the top two flats shared a bathroom). You can see from the surviving chimneys that the central properties have 4 chimney pots both front and rear, while numbers 1 & 2 and 11 & 12 have stacks with only 3 pots. This tells you the number of fireplaces, and thus storeys, the houses are intended to have.

The second argument is that a 3 bedroom house “is inadequate as a family home” and “too small for a family of 4”. It seems unnecessary to comment on this.