23 West Hampstead Mews NW6 3BB

2024/4230/P

West Hampstead Mews is located within South Hampstead conservation area and was set out as part of the original 1870s layout of the area. The buildings within West Hampstead Mews are identified as ones that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and are thereby acknowledged to be Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs)

Works to an NDHA should better reveal and/or enhance the contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposal includes:

* Roof Replacement: Replacing the existing slate roof with a Zinc Patina standing seam roof to create a usable third floor while maintaining the building's overall form and height.
* Chimney Demolition: Removing the existing chimney to facilitate the roof alterations.
* Rear Extension: Adding a single-story flat-roof extension to the rear of the property, clad in vertical cedar cladding.

Interrogation of the planning history for the site shows that the existing form of the building is the result of consent granted in 1986/87 (ref 8501965, 8600715, 8601758 ) for the rather unsympathetic transformation of the roof and other works to approximately its current form. Unfortunately, none of these records record the original form of the building before extension.

The front elevation shows residual evidence of a front-facing Dutch gable. Front-facing gables were often used as an architectural device to create a focal point that makes the building appear taller and more imposing. Nineteenth century revival architectural styles (popular mid-century) often sought to create a sense of height and grandeur by the incorporation of elements inspired by medieval European architecture. The front-facing gable was the architectural focus behind which the roof would be hidden. It is therefore architecturally incongruous to have the roof appear above the front parapet as proposed.

In addition to the relationship between the front elevations and height of mew buildings and the street, there should also be consideration of the contribution made by the roofscapes to the character and appearance of the area. The presence of chimney stacks and their punctuation of the skyline is a significance visual component of the historic streetscape character. Demolition of chimney stacks should be strongly resisted.

The acknowledgement of heritage worth and the contribution mews buildings make to the character and appearance of the conservation area is spelt out in the conservation area appraisal:

*5.10 There are two traditional mews in the CA: West Hampstead Mews and Wavel Mews. These properties are generally two storeys with pitched roofs hidden behind parapets and attractive simple elevations in keeping with their original function as garages, workshops and stables. As is typical in mews properties, the front elevation is not set back.*

*6.2 There is a strong presumption to retain buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. […] The integrity and nature of the context are consequently influential in making this judgement.*

The conservation area appraisal expressly provides guidance to refute the type of unsympathetic, over-development outlined in this application:

*6.2 There is a strong presumption to retain buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. […] The integrity and nature of the context are consequently influential in making this judgement.*

*7.2 Perhaps the greatest single development pressure in the area is the continued trend for the conversion […] The trend for residential conversion has led a number of associated development pressures, some falling within planning control:*

*• […]*

*• roof extensions and changes to roof profiles and detail*

*10.1*

*• in undertaking its development control function the Council will ensure that the historic details which are an essential part of the special architectural character of Swiss Cottage Conservation Area are preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate;*

*12.2 Perhaps the greatest single development pressure in the area is the continued trend for the conversion […]. This trend has led a number of associated development pressures, some falling within planning control:*

*• […]*

*• roof extensions and changes to roof profiles and detail*

The proposal does not comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan, nor Policies 2 and 3 of the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

This proposal detracts from the special character, architectural and historic significance of the streetscape, and the contribution made to the significance of the conservation area. The application is therefore not supported.