
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2013

by Paul Freer BA (Hons) LLM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 8 January 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/A/13/2204151
10 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6 3HU

- 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 Amos Sivan of ASB Architects against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2013/1447/P, dated 13 March 2013, was refused by notice dated 9 July 2013.
 - The development proposed is described as the utilisation of the loft space by introducing electronically operated sliding glazed panes set back within the roof line and concealed by the up-stand of the chimney parapet.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. At the time of my site inspection, the entire roof of the property had been removed and works were in progress pursuant to a separate planning permission. However, the roof void was visible from street level and with the benefit of the application drawings I was able to assess the proposed development on that basis, as well as in the context of the roofs of adjoining properties. For convenience of language, I have referred to the now removed roof in the present tense in this decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property, and whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The character of the South Hampstead Conservation Area is derived in part from the substantial brick buildings within wide streets lined by mature trees. The South Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Conservation Area Appraisal) explains that the character of the conservation area relies significantly on the attractive, wide variety of prominent roof forms, in which features such as decorative gables, pediments and turrets contribute to original and carefully designed roofscapes. The Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that these roofscapes play a very important role in maintaining the character of the conservation area.

5. The appeal property is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. The rear roof slope of the appeal property is clearly visible from Greencroft Gardens and, as shown on the application drawings, features a decorative gable of the type described in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The roof of the appeal property is therefore typical of the original and carefully designed roofscapes from which much of the character and appearance of the conservation area derives.
6. The rear roof slope of the appeal property is staggered, with the smaller section recessed in relation to the larger section. Although set back within the roof line, the proposed sliding glazed panes would occupy a substantial proportion of the smaller section of the roof and would dominate that part of the roof. The proposed sliding glazed panes would also compete and conflict with the gable feature, which in the context of the character and appearance of the conservation area is an important architectural feature. Consequently, in my view the proposed sliding glazed panes would detract from an element of the host property that makes an important contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
7. I note that planning permission has been granted for an external escape staircase at the rear of the property, and for a major refurbishment of the property that includes two dormer windows to the rear roof slope. The appellant considers that the proposed sliding glazed panes represent a comparatively small change in relation to these alterations. However, I have not been provided with details of either of those schemes. Consequently, I am not able to assess the comparative impact of those developments, or to reach a view on the counter-argument advanced by the Council that the cumulative impact of all these developments would result in a cluttered appearance.
8. At the site inspection, I was requested to view a similar development to that proposed in the rear roof slope of No. 47/49 Greencroft Gardens. Although also a substantial brick building within the South Hampstead Conservation Area, it is of different design to the appeal property and, unlike the appeal property, does not form part of a terrace. This building can therefore be distinguished from the appeal property. Furthermore, I have not been provided with any details relating to the particular circumstances that led to the construction of that development. Consequently, I attach only limited weight to the development at No. 47/49 Greencroft Gardens.
9. I recognise that the proposed development would provide an area of amenity space for the occupiers of the top floor flat which would otherwise not be available. However, whilst I acknowledge the benefit to the occupiers in that respect, this does not in my view outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area that would result from the proposed development.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would detract from the character and appearance of the host property, and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to Policies DP24 and DP25 of the Camden Development Policies 2010-2025. These policies require alterations and extensions to existing buildings to be of the highest standard of design, and that only development that preserves and

enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area will be permitted.

11. Having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Freer

INSPECTOR