



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2011

by Simon Miles BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 November 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/11/2161922

5 Ascham Street, London NW5 2PB

- 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 Jonathan Harrison against the decision of the London Borough of Camden Council.
 - The application Ref 2011/2157/P, dated 26 April 2011, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2011.
 - The development proposed is a mansard roof extension and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Kentish Town Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to 5 Ascham Street, a traditional terraced property within the Kentish Town Conservation Area, which derives much of its special character from its fine stock of period properties. These include the traditional terraces within Ascham Street.
 4. The appellant has submitted a sight line section demonstrating that, because of the height of the terraces and parapets, the proposed roof extension would not be visible in public views from the immediately adjacent section of the street. The most significant views of the development would be from the upper floor windows of nearby properties. However, the evidence before me, including the observations made during the course of my site inspection, does not persuade me that there would not be long distance views, albeit of a more limited nature, from street level. It follows that the views of the development would not be so limited as to render the effect insignificant.
 5. Whilst it is sometimes the case that roof extensions have become widespread and in so doing have altered the character of traditional terraced streets, that is not the case here. On the contrary, although I observed a number of roof extensions on adjacent streets, the original valley roofs on both sides of
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Ascham Road remain largely unimpaired. In these circumstances I share the Council's concern about the disruptive effect of the proposed mansard extension on the roofscape of the host building and the rhythm, symmetry and uniformity of the street scene.

6. I take this view even though in other respects the design of the proposal may be acceptable. In particular, I have had regard to Camden Planning Guidance 1 *Design* (CPG1). Whilst not having the same status as development plan policy, as adopted supplementary planning guidance it carries significant weight. This guidance states, amongst other things, that roof alterations will be resisted where there is an unbroken run of valley roofs or in the case of terraces having a roofline that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions. Since the appeal scheme would affect just such a largely unimpaired roofline, it is in clear contravention of this guidance.
7. Furthermore, whilst it may be the case that views of the proposed development would be limited, I am concerned that the adverse effect of this proposal would be exacerbated by the cumulative adverse effect of this extension and those that would surely follow if I were to set aside the Council's adopted policies and guidance without good reason. This consideration adds weight to my concern about the inappropriate design of the proposed roof extension in the particular situation and circumstances that I have described.
8. This leads me to conclude that the proposed development would not preserve the character and appearance of the Kentish Town Conservation Area. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS14 of the adopted London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy 2010-2025, Policies DP24 and DP25 and the Council's LDF Development Policies 2010-2025 and CPG1, insofar as these seek to promote the highest standard of design, whilst preserving and enhancing the character, heritage and setting of conservation areas. The proposal is also contrary to the draft National Planning Policy Framework, which is a material consideration, to the extent that this is concerned to protect the built and historic environment.
9. In other respects, whilst I appreciate that the appellant is seeking to improve the property and its living accommodation, this must be weighed against the requirement to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. General improvements to the condition of the property could be undertaken without the need for a roof extension. Overall, my conclusion on the main issue provides a compelling and over-riding reason why the development should not be permitted. Therefore the appeal does not succeed.

Simon Miles

INSPECTOR