



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2010

by **Mike Fox** BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

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

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Decision date:
20 September 2010

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/10/2132722

4 King's Mews, London, WC1N 2HY

- 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 Julien Frazzo against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
- The application Ref 2010/1393/P, dated 1 March 2010, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2010.
- The development proposed is the erection of a second floor roof extension with a rear roof terrace and external alterations to the front, including a new balustrade to the front balcony and new doors to the garage on the front elevation.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

2. In my view the main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or the appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a recently completed two-storey mews development within a mainly residential area. Some of the original warehouses remain and there are commercial and light industrial uses nearby. I consider that, despite the redevelopment of properties in King's Mews, it has retained the character and appearance of a traditional mews streetscene. The property backs onto listed buildings in John Street and lies within a Conservation Area. A key consideration in my determination of the appeal is whether the proposal would enhance or harm the relationship with the next door property at no.2, which together read as a short terrace. This relationship is expressed through the overall design, scale, height and external materials, all of which match and complement each other and therefore contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
4. The proposed increase from two to three storeys and the change from the existing flat roof to a contrasting mansard design would, in my view, fundamentally detract from the existing relationship between the two properties. The proposal, and in particular the bulky roof addition, would appear dominant and 'top heavy' in relation to its next door neighbour. In my judgment, this impact would be increased by the lack of a number of traditional mansard design features. These include the lack of a parapet wall; lack of a

secondary upper roof, which would have softened its overall impact; the thickness of the dormer surrounds; and the height of the roof above the dormers. In my opinion, these departures from established traditional mansard features, together with its bulky appearance, would combine to give an overpowering elevation, at odds with the streetscene.

5. I also consider that the proposed new dominant steel and glass balustrading would result in the loss of the existing harmonious relationship between the next door balconies. There would also be no direct correlation between the proposed dormer and the lower storey windows.
6. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the statutory requirement¹ for development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, which is reflected in *London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan* (UDP) Policy B7. The proposal would also be contrary to UDP Policies B1 and B3, which require development to respect and not to harm its setting and to *Camden Planning Guidance*, which states (paragraph 41.12) that a roof alteration or addition is likely to be unacceptable where complete groups of terraces have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions. The proposal would also be contrary to its guidance for mansard roof design.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to nearby buildings which vary in height, styles and detailing from the appeal property, and to plans for an additional three storey building on the opposite side of King's Mews. I have not been informed, however, about the details or site history of this development, although I understand that it would occupy a larger site than the appeal property, with a different immediate context. I can therefore only give this consideration little weight. Whilst I agree that the setting is mixed, I am not persuaded that this outweighs the harmful effect of the proposal on the next door building, which in my view should be the primary design cue for the appeal property.
8. The appellant has also argued that retention and enlargement of residential use in the area is supported by the UDP and whilst I note that provision of 3-4 bedroom market housing in Camden is identified as medium priority, this has not outweighed the reasons that have led me to dismiss the appeal.
9. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

Mike Fox

INSPECTOR

¹ The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 (1).