



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2010

by Graham Garnham BA BPHIL MRTPI

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

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**Decision date:
27 August 2010**

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/10/2132477

49 Murray Mews, London, NW1 9RH

- 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 Mark Ubsdell against the decision of London Borough of Camden Council.
 - The application ref 2010/1856/P, dated 29 March 2010, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2010.
 - The development proposed is two storey extension to rear of existing terrace house.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

2. I consider that this is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building, the pair of which it is part and the wider Camden Square Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a small house with accommodation on 3 floors. It is attached in a stepped layout to a dwelling of similar size, design and appearance at no.50. The two were built as a pair in the 1970s on land at the junction of Murray Mews with Cantalowes Road.
 4. The front of no.49 abuts a narrow footway on Murray Mews. Alterations to this elevation include the replacement of a ground floor window with a door and 2 other windows. This change is relatively minor, and would be in keeping with both no.49 and no.50, which similarly has a front door. However, the proposal also includes replacing existing rooflights with a dormer window. I consider that this would be unduly large compared to the narrow, steeply sloping plane of the roof. It would detract from the design of the original house and unbalance the pair (no.50 has no dormer on this elevation).
 5. The main changes would be at the back of the house. The rear wall is currently recessed from that at no.50 and partially hidden by it in views from Cantalowes Road. It is proposed to bring the full height of the wall out to a point beyond the rear wall of no.50. The scale and prominence of this extension would be emphasised by the use of full height glazing for both storeys with a zinc fascia in between and at eaves level. The extension would transform the appearance
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- of the rear of the house, reverse the deliberate stepped relationship with no.50 and severely compromise the architectural integrity of the pair.
6. These changes would be clearly seen from Cantalowes Road. A new rear roof slope would be constructed above the extension, and a large dormer placed on it. This dormer would be similar in size and design to the one it would replace and to an identical one at no.50. These rear dormers are part of the original design. Bringing that at the appeal site into a much more prominent position would, however, draw attention to a feature that I consider is out of scale with the roof slope and the original size of the houses. It is also not clear to me what form the new roof would take between the existing front slope and the relocated rear slope. At present, the party wall between the 2 houses at roof level has an 'M' profile, which arises from the stepped relationship of their ridge lines. Proposed Section B appears to show the part retention of this feature, while Proposed Section A does not. I consider that this is an attractive and distinctive feature when seen from Cantalowes Road, which it would be desirable to preserve.
 7. The stepped layout of the pair, their modest scale and modern design reflect their siting at a point of transition between the imposing and larger scale mid 19th century houses on Cantalowes Road and the smaller scale, much more eclectic designs characteristic of Murray Mews. Although sited in Murray Mews, the rear of no.50 is only visible from Cantalowes Road, where the modernity and striking appearance of the extension would detract from the more subdued and traditional style that predominates along the principal roads of the conservation area. The changes would also detract from the original design concept of the house and pair, which are identified in the Camden Square Conservation Area Statement as being among the unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area.
 8. I understand the wish of the appellant to enlarge a relatively compact house to create more spacious family accommodation. However, this personal need has to be balanced against the public interest in achieving a high standard of design in the built environment. In addition, there is a statutory duty on decision makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. I have found the proposal to fall significantly short in respect of both these considerations.
 9. I conclude that the proposal would detract significantly from the character and appearance of the building and the pair of which it is part, and fail to preserve the character and appearance of the wider Camden Square Conservation Area. This would be contrary to saved policies B1, B3 & B7 in the London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006).
 10. Given my findings on the main issue, I consider that planning permission should be withheld. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR