



The Planning Inspectorate

Room 1404
Tollgate House
Houlton Street
Bristol BS2 9DJ

APPEAL
DISMISSED

Direct Line 0117 - 987 8927
Switchboard 0117 - 987 8000
Fax No 0117 - 987 8139
GTN 1374 - 8927
E-mail ENQUIRIES.PINS@GTNET.GOV.UK

Anthony Bowhill and Associates
4 Leathermarket Street
LONDON
SE1 3HN

Your Ref:
4335
Our Ref:
T/APP/X5210/A/98/294398/P4

Date: 27 JUL 1998

Dear Sirs

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPEAL BY MR B ZEKARIA
APPLICATION NO: PW9802032

1. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions has appointed me to determine your client's appeal against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden to refuse planning permission for the erection of a 3 storey side extension and alterations to an existing means of access, at 24 Crossfield Road, London NW3. I have considered all the written representations together with all other material submitted to me. I inspected the site on 21 July 1998.
2. Following the Council's decision, and in connection with this appeal, you submitted a revised drawing numbered 5240/A/03/RevB, dated 8 May 1998. This shows the deletion of your client's previous proposal to alter the means of access at the appeal site. The Council's statement merely notes this revision, without specific comment. However, I have assumed that it would effectively overcome the Council's previous planning objections to this aspect of the original scheme. The proposal otherwise remains unaltered. Since it would not prejudice the interests of any party to the appeal, I have considered the proposal with the revision in mind. For the avoidance of doubt, I have based my decision solely on the proposal as shown in the revised drawing.
3. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings, and from the written representations, I consider that there is one main issue outstanding in this appeal, albeit with 3 separate aspects. This is the effect of the 3 storey side extension on the appearance of the terrace which would be thereby extended, on the street scene in Crossfield Road, and on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area.
4. 24 Crossfield Road is the northernmost house in a broadly uniform group of 7 which together comprise a 3 storey terrace, built in the 1960s, in the south eastern part of the road. Very typical of their era, these all display rectilinear styling, flat roofs, large areas of glazing and weatherboarding, and overhanging front balconies. As an end of terrace property, No 24 is separated by its own single storey garage from the adjoining building to the north, a somewhat larger and higher brick building used as a school. Thus there is at present a small (approx 3.7 m. wide) but distinct gap between the 2 buildings, which both present blank yellow-brick walls towards it. The gap is accentuated somewhat by the fact that the terrace



is sunk below street level. Through this gap are visible from the street some 4 storey dwellings in Strathray Gardens, and a mature tree and other garden vegetation. Although, by my calculation, the proposed extension would increase the frontage width of the house by about 55 per cent, it would be built in a style and in materials to match the existing style and materials. At the other end of the terrace is a garden area which separates it from Eton Avenue, such that the terrace continues the building line in that street.

5. I have borne in mind relevant policies from the Camden Borough Plan (adopted 1987) and from the Unitary Development Plan, which is at a late stage towards adoption, and which merits due weight in accordance with PPG 1. In particular, those relating to the design of new development and the protection and enhancement of designated conservation areas. In addition, I have given some weight to the Council's supplementary design guidance, including that concerning the protection of important gaps in the street scene. In addition, since the site lies within a conservation area, I am required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area.

6. In essence, the result of this appeal depends upon the answer to a single question: whether the aforementioned gap in the street scene is of sufficient importance and value in the street scene to be worthy of retention. I appreciate that this must be largely a matter of subjective judgement. Your view is that it has no such importance, and, indeed, that the street scene would be improved by the proposed development. I disagree. In my view, the gap is valuable, despite its relatively narrow width. In townscape terms, Crossfield Road is far from homogeneous. It contains a number of distinct buildings and groups of buildings: apart from the subject modern terrace, there are 2 larger, linked institutional buildings to the north, which then give on to a 4 storey terrace of Victorian houses. Opposite the appeal terrace a new building is in the process of construction. Elsewhere, other styles prevail. In sum, these buildings display a considerable architectural variety, and most of them are physically separated by gaps from their neighbours. In my opinion, these gaps, which also permit glimpses of trees and other greenery, help to preserve the separate identities of the buildings and prevent them merging visually with one another. Thus even the relatively narrow gap between No 24 and its taller and architecturally distinct neighbour serves to separate the 2 buildings visually. In my view, this is so despite the linking garage, and is a positive feature in the existing street scene. If it were "filled" in the manner proposed, this function would be lost. The appearance of the terrace, and of the street scene and wider townscape - and hence that of the conservation area - would be harmed.

7. This is why I have decided to dismiss your client's appeal. I have considered all the other matters raised in your statement, and in letters from consultees, but they do not alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main town planning issue in this appeal.

8. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully



P E Dobsen MA(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI FRGS
Inspector