
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2014

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 May 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/A/14/2213832
57d Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DB

- 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 Brilliant Buildings LLP against the decision of the London Borough of Camden Council.
 - The application Ref 2013/4661/P, dated 22 July 2013, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2013.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of a roof extension to existing office building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a roof extension to the existing office building at 57d Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DB in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: 2013/4661/P, dated 22 July 2013, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan A 000 001 PO, A 025 001 PO, A 025 002 PO, A 025 003 PO, A 025 004 PO, A 100 001 PO, A 100 002 P1, A 110 001 P1, A 110 002 P1, A 110 003 P1, A 120 001 P1 and A 120 002 PO.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 57d Jamestown Road is situated within The Rotunda Complex which is a private courtyard formed by industrial buildings formerly used for the manufacture of pianos. The majority of the buildings within this complex are of a similar era, although the development that surrounds it is extremely diverse architecturally.
 4. Whilst I note that the Council's reasons for refusal centre wholly upon the impact of the proposed extension upon the appearance of the host property, in determining this appeal I consider that it cannot be assessed in isolation from
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its surroundings. The buildings that are located within the vicinity of the appeal site include historic residential town houses to the west of the site entrance, to the ultra modern Iceworks building opposite. There are other examples where traditionally constructed buildings have been altered and extended in a contemporary manner, with roof top additions at a number of addresses, which include 31 Oval Road and The Henson, which have combined modern glass and steel construction with traditional brick.

5. The proposed extension would be constructed over a more recent flat roof, two storey element to the northern end of the subject building and has been designed so that it would act as a foil to its vernacular form. A shadow gap between the host building and the proposed extension would also be provided, so as to create visual separation and essentially appear as a standalone feature. I note that the concept behind the proposed galvanised steel cladding pays respect to the site's historical context, with the facade pattern extracted from the internal structure of a grand piano. I commend this design concept which I consider conforms with the design aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'), paragraph 63 of which states that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.
6. Furthermore, whilst matters of design can be subjective, paragraph 60 of the Framework states that planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. Whilst this paragraph rounds off by stating that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, taking into account the diverse architectural building designs and forms within the locality, I find that the proposals would at the very least protect the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.
7. Consequently, I consider that the proposed extension would not appear as a bulky, incongruous addition, that would be an architectural feature akin to a statement of public art. The form and design of the proposed extension would contrast with the existing building, but for the reasons given above, I do not find in this instance, that this would be harmful. Consequently, I find that the extension's form, size and location respects the design and proportions of the existing building; maintaining the composition of the host property which currently has a rather bland flat roof extension situated at its most prominent end. The steel cladding would provide a significant contrast to the host building's traditional materials, but would act as an innovative contrast as opposed to a pastiche design solution.
8. I note that the building abuts the border of the Regents Canal Conservation Area on the opposite side of Jamestown Road, and that the Primrose Hill Conservation Area is situated to the south and west. The aforementioned building known as The Henson and 31 Oval Road are situated within these Conservation Areas respectively and demonstrate that a fusion of traditional and contemporary architectural styles need not be out of keeping. From this basis I consider that the proposed extension would not appear as a bulky, incongruous addition and would not disrupt the balanced composition of the subject building. It would be marginally higher than the ridge line of the main building, however, with the shadow gap, adequate separation would be

provided. Furthermore, whilst the proposed extension would partially obscure the existing northern gable end of the main range of the subject building, I consider that it would not significantly jut into the views of its roof.

9. Therefore, I find that the proposal would not have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host building or the surrounding area. The proposal complies with Policy CS14 of the Camden Core Strategy (2010 – 2025) and Policy DP24 of the Camden Development Policies (2010 – 2025) which require all development, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and to consider character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; the character and proportions of the existing building; and the quality of materials to be used. In coming to this conclusion I have also had regard to the Camden Planning Guidance entitled Design CPG1: in particular the third bullet point of its paragraph 5.7 which states that additional storeys are likely to be acceptable where there are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern, and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm.

Conclusion and Conditions

10. Having regard to all matters raised I conclude that the appeal should succeed.
11. In addition to the standard time limit condition the Council has suggested that a condition be imposed ensuring that the proposed development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. I consider this to be necessary so as to ensure that the design and materials employed are fully implemented in accordance with the submitted details. The Council's third suggested condition requires all new external work to be carried out in materials that resemble as closely as possible, in colour and texture, those of the existing building. However, the proposal is to provide galvanised steel cladding and a green roof to the extension, in order to provide a contrast to the existing building. Therefore, I do not consider such a condition to be reasonable or necessary.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR