

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2015

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9 March 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/14/2228124

13 Priory Road, London NW6 4NN

- 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 Mrs Ilona Suschitzky against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2014/4472/P was refused by notice dated 1 September 2014.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as the erection of a side and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Priory Road Conservation Area, within which the site is located.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns one of several similar semi-detached properties located in Priory Road. In the Appellant's Design and Access Statement it is suggested that no. 13 dates from the Victorian period. These dwellings have an elegant and highly symmetrical appearance with attractive detailing. Despite a number of roof level alterations these buildings, including that at the appeal site, contribute positively to the architectural quality of the Conservation Area.
4. The scheme would include a dormer extension on the hip at the side of the main roof. The depth of this addition would be excessive, with the length of the ridge of its roof exceeding that of the main roof of the host property, for example. The width of the addition would also be significantly greater than its height. There would also be fairly minimal gaps to the roof slopes above and the eaves below. These factors would reflect the undue bulk of the roof extension, which would appear unacceptably contrived and dominant, despite the gable end.
5. Moreover, it would also unduly compete with important roof level features such as the front parapet wall and adjacent chimney stacks. In conjunction with these features and the existing front dormer addition it would give the impression of an unacceptably cluttered roofscape.

6. In consequence, the architectural quality of the host dwelling and the positive contribution it makes to the Conservation Area would be significantly diminished. I saw at my site visit that the adverse impact would be readily apparent in views from the street in Priory Road. Furthermore, the suggestion that acceptability should be conferred on the basis of limited visibility seems to me to represent an implicit acknowledgement of the unsympathetic nature of the addition.
7. There are examples of side dormer additions in the street but there are also properties where these have not been built. In any event, I consider that these alterations illustrate the discordant nature of such development and should not be used to justify additional schemes that would further detract from the quality of the built environment. Furthermore, without the full details and background to these cases there is no information to show that the Council's decision making has been unreasonably inconsistent.
8. Matters such as the use of white painted timber in the window frames and slate cladding would be acceptable. Nevertheless, because of the adverse effects that would result, I conclude that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would not be preserved.
9. This detrimental impact would be contrary to Camden Development Policies (CDP), Policy DP25, which seeks to ensure preservation and enhancement. The harm to the character of the existing building would conflict with CDP Policy DP24. Even if the development complied with Camden Core Strategy Policy CS14 d) regarding accessibility, it would still be subject to the other criteria of this policy. These include CS14 a), with which there would be conflict because of the failure to achieve the highest standard of design that respects local context.
10. In relation to designated heritage assets Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) indicates that where there would be harm that is less than substantial, as in this case, it must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance there is no evidence of any significant public benefit and as a result there would also be conflict with the policies of the Framework in respect of heritage assets.
11. The Appellant indicates that the dormer addition would enable the provision of a staircase with its size no greater than necessary. Nevertheless, such provision would, in this case, be achieved at the undue expense of the quality of the Conservation Area. Despite the absence of objections from the owners of adjoining properties this appeal must be considered strictly on its own planning merits. The mere absence of harm in respect of matters such as building lines, privacy and daylight cannot outweigh the detrimental impact I have identified. It is not for me to provide advice regarding a revised scheme and this is a matter for the Council.
12. Taking account of all other considerations raised, there is nothing to justify accepting the proposal given the adverse impact on the Conservation Area that would result and the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR