
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2015

by Jacqueline Wilkinson Reg. Architect IHBC

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

Decision date: 11 March 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/14/2228179

55 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 7BA

- 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 and Mrs Mordaunt-Crook against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2014/4604/P, dated 15 July 2014, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2014.
 - The development proposed is upper ground floor rear extension and other minor alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an upper ground floor rear extension and other minor alterations at 55 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 7BA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2014/4604/P, dated 15 July 2014, 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: 0037-A: 02-201-A, (location plan), 02-202-A (site plan), 03-301-A (existing and proposed lower ground floor plans), 03-302-A (existing and proposed upper ground floor plans), 03-303-A (existing and proposed first floor plans), 03-304-A (existing and proposed second floor plans), 03-305-A (existing and proposed roof plans), 04-401-A (existing section AA), 04-441-A (proposed section AA), 05-501-A (existing and proposed front elevations), 05-502-A (existing and proposed side elevations), 05-502-A (existing and proposed adjoining elevations), 05-503-A (existing and proposed rear elevations).
 - 3) The materials and details to be used in the construction of the external surfaces and windows of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall not commence until full details of the reinstatement of the front boundary wall adjacent to the highway have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in full in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and whether the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

Character of the building

3. The appeal building is a nineteenth century villa style stuccoed corner property, whose address is 55 Gloucester Road, but whose main façade faces St Mark's Crescent. It is an unusual one-off design, with an asymmetrical façade facing St Mark's Crescent. The proposed extension would be to the side of this. It would pick up the line of the stucco base of the building and would be set back from the front façade. The fenestration and building details would match the existing.
4. These design features accord with the broad guidance given in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance *Design*, particularly paragraph 4.16, which requires a side extension to be no taller than the porch and to be set back. Paragraph 4.17 requires that the composition is not compromised, which would not be the case here as the facade is not formally balanced.
5. I therefore conclude that the proposed side extension would not harm the character or appearance of the building. It would therefore comply in that respect with the requirements of policy DP24 (*Securing high quality design*) and DP25 (*Conserving Camden's heritage*) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

Conservation area

6. The Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement describes St Mark's Crescent as a secondary street of villa style properties with a more intimate and enclosed character in comparison to the principal streets. Glimpsing views between buildings to the canal are noted, as are the more significant views of the rear of properties in Regents Park Road and their gardens, across the rear gardens of the corner properties at the western end. The gap between the appeal building and its neighbour 30 St Mark's Crescent is narrower and is not specifically identified, but it does contribute a sense of openness and affords views through to the rear elevations of the Gloucester Road properties and the tops of trees.
7. Historically, the space between these two properties would have been open, but in recent times the front walls were demolished to allow off road parking and each house had a small modern garage. Although both of these garages had been demolished by the time of my site visit, I could see from the submitted photos that this would have had a harmful effect on the character of the area.
8. I have also been given information about an approved side extension at 30 St Marks Crescent (Ref 2013/5039/P). This had not been built at the time of my visit, but work was underway. This side extension would be set back from the front wall of 30 and it would have a different building line to the proposed side extension at 55. There would be a gap between them, but this would too narrow to give views to the gardens behind.

9. Although the proposed extensions would be higher and more solid than the former garages, there would still be views over them of the rear elevations of the properties in Gloucester Avenue and tree tops beyond. The broadly intimate and enclosed character of the street would not be harmed and no significant view would be lost or unacceptably reduced. The replacement of the front boundary wall, which can be secured by condition, would enhance the street scene and would allow the front garden to be returned to planting.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed extension would preserve the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the broad aims of policy DP25 (*Conserving Camden's heritage*) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies, as well policy CS14 (*Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage*) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

Conclusions

11. I have found that the proposal would preserve the character or appearance of this unusual corner building. The view between the two buildings is not critical to the wider character of the conservation area, but it does give a welcome sense of the garden space beyond, which would still be experienced. I have also identified a positive enhancement by the rebuilding of the lost section of boundary wall and re-establishing the garden.
12. For the reasons given above I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

13. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in the light of the advice given in the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 206. I have applied the standard time limits and for the avoidance of doubt I have required that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
14. In the interests of the appearance of the building I have applied a condition requiring the materials and details to be used in the construction of the external surfaces and windows of the extension hereby permitted to match those used in the existing building.
15. The front boundary wall was covered over by hoardings at the time of the site visit. I note the comments of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee about the specific boundary wall detail to be found in the area. In order to ensure that the details of the front boundary wall are appropriate to the conservation area I have therefore required that the development hereby permitted shall not commence until full details of the reinstatement of the front boundary wall adjacent to the highway have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. I have also required that the development shall be carried out in full in accordance with the approved details.

Jacqueline Wilkinson

INSPECTOR