
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 November 2013

by Ava Wood Dip Arch MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 December 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/13/2203152
13 Prince Albert Road, London, NW1 7SR

- 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 Ms Sharon Waterman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref:2013/2542/P, dated 30 April 2013, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2013.
 - The development proposed is a first floor set back extension over the existing kitchen extension on the west flank of the house and a number of restorations of plan-form.
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Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/E/13/2203154
13 Prince Albert Road, London, NW1 7SR

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Sharon Waterman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref:2013/2617/L, dated 30 April 2013, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2013.
 - The works proposed are a first floor set back extension over the existing kitchen extension on the west flank of the house and a number of restorations of plan-form.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in both appeals are whether the proposed development and works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the appeal property, which is listed as Grade II, and the effect on the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The 3-storey property (plus basement and attic) is one of a row of pairs of houses within a larger group of stucco fronted detached and semi-detached mid C19 villas (Nos. 1-15 Prince Albert Road). The front facades of the semi-detached properties are generally symmetrical except where side extensions have been added. These include a side extension at No.14 (paired with No. 15) extending to ground floor level, and side extensions at Nos. 7 and 9 (paired with Nos. 6 and 8 respectively) rising above the first floor. No. 13 has a side

extension at ground floor and basement level. Permission was granted in 2009 for a similarly sized extension at No. 12, in order to balance the pair. As this permission has not been implemented, the pair remains asymmetrical as a result of the extension to the appeal property. Nevertheless, a key characteristic of the original building (i.e. Nos. 12 and 13 together) is the use of symmetry as a device to make the two properties resemble one large villa. The internal alterations described in the appellant's Heritage Statement may well have been extensive but have not diminished the historic associations or value of the building as part of a group of similarly styled Italianate villas.

4. The proposed scheme seeks to address objections to a previous extension, also at first floor level, which was refused by the Council and dismissed at appeal. My colleague observed that existing side extensions on the appeal property and those nearby are "*generally subordinate to the host properties*". That is certainly the case where side extensions are restricted in height and do not extend into the first floor.
5. The proposal before me would involve the creation of an additional floor to be accommodated by lowering the ceiling of the ground floor kitchen below and erection of a lead roofed addition above it. The structure would be set back from the sides of the existing side extension, and partly concealed behind a new raised parapet.
6. The whole assembly would be much reduced in size from the scheme considered at the last appeal. However, even this modestly sized addition would cause a visual imbalance in the building's symmetry by virtue of the increased parapet height and visibility of virtually the entire roof of the new extension behind it. The proposal would reinforce the unevenness that currently exists. The effect would be apparent when viewed from the front of the building but even more pronounced when seen from the side, where the whole assembly would be seen as more than a skylight as suggested. An extension at this level, even of a size reduced from the previous appeal, would disrupt the intended uniformity in the building's composition to the detriment of its essential architectural interest and historic group value.
7. Internally, the main alteration involves the creation of a new opening in the study at first floor level¹. My colleague expressed some concern that "*...it would result in this relatively small study being dominated by four doors and a window.*" While not disagreeing with that sentiment, had I found the extension to be acceptable, the scale of harm to the interior of the building would not be so extensive as to rule out access to it from the study as intended.
8. The character and appearance in this sub-area of the conservation area is described in the Conservation Area Statement as being dominated by large villa style properties and surrounded by substantial garden spaces. This description is borne out by the villas at Nos. 1-15 Prince Albert Road, the properties visible to the north from Prince Albert Road and Regents Park to the south. The effect is of a spacious, parkland setting in which the uniformity and grandeur of the listed villas play an important role.
9. Because of its size and containment, the proposed extension would not intrude on that spaciousness. Views towards the buildings to the rear would be largely maintained. However, alongside the spaciousness, symmetry and uniformity

¹ This relates to the listed building appeal only

are important attributes and susceptible to harm from even the smallest of changes. Additional erosion of the building's symmetry caused by the proposed extension, and the increased imbalance, would be apparent from a number of public viewpoints to the detriment of the appearance of this part of the conservation area.

10. The fact of uneven (and larger) side extensions to nearby properties does not warrant allowing the appeals in the face of the adverse impacts described above. Text in the Council's Development Policies similarly makes it clear that past extensions should not necessarily be regarded as precedents for subsequent extensions.
11. The harm caused by the appeals proposal would be less than substantial but nevertheless needs to be weighed against its public benefits. The building is in viable use and currently subject to refurbishment and creation of a new basement area. The proposed extension would add to what is a fairly generously sized home, and no doubt benefit the owners, but wider public benefits are unlikely to be forthcoming.
12. On the two main issues I conclude that the harm to the special architectural interest of the listed building, diminution of its group value and harm to the appearance of the conservation area would be in conflict with the Council's policy aims of preserving and enhancing its heritage assets (Camden Core Strategy Policy CS14 and Development Policy DP25). The policies reflect the National Planning Policy Framework's desire to conserve heritage assets. The proposed scheme would conflict with national policy due to the harm caused to the significance of designated heritage assets. The appeals fail for the reasons explained.

Ava Wood
Inspector