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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2016

**by H Baugh-Jones BA(Hons) DipLA MA CMLI**

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

**Decision date: 25 May 2016**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/15/3141326**

**5 Hampstead West, 224 Iverson Road, London NW6 2HL**

- 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 Lola Rose Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
  - The application Ref 2015/1667/P, dated 23 October 2014, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2015.
  - The development proposed is ground floor extensions and rear dormer roof extension to B1 commercial unit.
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This decision is issued in accordance with Section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 5 May 2016.

### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for ground floor extensions and rear dormer roof extension to B1 commercial unit at 5 Hampstead West, 224 Iverson Road, London NW6 2HL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2015/1667/P, dated 23 October 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: Site Plan Drawing No 140926/01; Block Plan Drawing No 140926/02; Ground Floor Plan, First Floor Plan, Roof Plan Drawing No 140926/03; Front Elevation, Side Elevation Drawing No 140926/04; Rear Elevation, Section A-A Drawing No 140926/05; Section B-B, Section C-C Drawing No 140926/06; Section D-D, Section E-E Drawing No 140926/07; Ground Floor Plan, First Floor Plan Drawing No 141001/08; Mezzanine Level Plan, Roof Plan Drawing No 141001/09; Section A-A, Section B-B Drawing No 141001/10; Section C-C, Section E-E Drawing No 141001/11; Rear Elevation, Side Elevation Drawing No 141001/12.
    - 3) No changes to the roof of the building shall take place until details of the colour and surface finish of the zinc cladding have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
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## **Main Issues**

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of (i) the area; and (ii) the host building.

## **Reasons**

3. The appeal building is one of a number of commercial properties dating from around the late 1980s. The development is arranged around a courtyard accessed via automatic gates from Iverson Road and buildings are of generally uniform appearance by way of their design and materials. No 5 is the westernmost building on the northern side of the courtyard and its northern elevation therefore faces on to Iverson Road. The proposed extensions would be located on the other side of the building that faces into the courtyard.
4. Policy CS14 of the Camden Core Strategy (2010) (CCS) seeks to promote high quality places and requires development to be of the highest design standard that respects local context and character. This objective is also reflected in Policy DP24 of the Camden Local Development Policies (2010) (CLDP), which includes alterations and extensions to existing buildings. Both of these documents pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) but are nevertheless in broad alignment with its requirement for good design set out in section 7. The above development plan policies therefore provide the starting point for my decision.
5. Further, the Council's adopted Planning Guidance – Design (updated 2015) (CPG1) sets out a set of principles in respect of roof alterations. However, these are somewhat prescriptive and are not matters subject to the 2015 updates and therefore pre-date the Framework, which is clear that design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.
6. The presence of mature trees along Iverson Road significantly limits views towards the appeal building from the west and the other buildings in the commercial group prevent any views from the east. Consequently, only the western end of the proposed dormer would be visible from Iverson Road and then only from the area around its junction with Rowntree Close. The effects on the Iverson Road street scene would therefore be minimal and acceptable.
7. However, the proposed dormer would cover the building's entire rear roof elevation and this change to its appearance would be noticeable in views from within Rowntree Close; from some of the buildings within the commercial development; and from within the courtyard. However, in my view, given the commercial context of the appeal building and other commercial development nearby, combined with the local variety of building styles and forms, including other dormers, the proposal would not appear wholly out of keeping with the overall character of the area.
8. I accept that the existing uniformity in the design of the commercial development (of which No 5 forms part) contributes to its character but in my view, although the buildings are not unattractive, neither are they of any great architectural merit. Whilst I therefore recognise that the proposal would change the building's appearance, this would only be apparent in a limited

- number of views. The proposal would also maintain the prominent projecting gable that is a key feature of the building facing into the courtyard, thus preserving one of its main elements and reducing the overall visual effects of the proposed dormer. Further, the use of zinc cladding could be the subject of a suitably worded condition with the aim of ensuring an acceptable finish.
9. Turning now to the proposed ground floor extensions; these would be relatively modest in the context of the building's proportions and would be subservient to the substantial projecting gable. Consequently the proposed ground floor additions would not adversely affect the building's overall character or appearance.
  10. Notwithstanding the above, I accept that the proposal would alter the uniformity of the overall complex of buildings. However, for the above reasons, any harm would be limited. Notwithstanding this, I recognise that the proposal does not strictly accord with the overall objectives of CCS Policy CS14 and CLDP Policy DP24.
  11. However, I have taken into account the 6 new jobs that would be created based on the expansion of the business associated with an increase in the space within the building. Paragraph 18 of the Framework makes clear the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity. Paragraph 19 sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and the significant weight that should be placed upon this objective. I consider that the proposal would be part and parcel of the area's evolution, particularly in respect of the need to ensure economic growth.
  12. Further, it could reasonably be expected that the increase in the number of employees located within the building would be likely to result in a comparative increase in support for local shops and food outlets, thereby having further economic benefits within the area.
  13. I note the previous Council decision refusing permission for a dormer on the roof elevation of No 9 within the commercial block that would have faced into the courtyard. However, whilst I have been provided with the officer report, I do not have any visual information to be able to make a useful comparison between the proposal in that case and the scheme before me. Further, the Council granted permission for a dormer on the other side of No 9's roof based substantially on the consideration that it was not highly visible. However, this is not the case as the dormer is clearly prominent in views from the railway bridge on the B510 close to the entrance to West Hampstead overground station and the appearance of the building has changed significantly. Notwithstanding this, the Council's decision in that case pre-dated the Framework and the clear Government commitment to securing economic growth set out in paragraphs 18 and 19. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its individual merits.
  14. I note that the neighbouring line of terraced dwellings is identified as Non-Designated Heritage Asset with architectural townscape significance, thus appearing on Camden's Local List (2015). However, given their juxtaposition with more modern large commercial development, the effects on their character would be minimal and acceptable.

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would result in minor harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the overall uniformity of the group of commercial properties. However, such effects would not be discernable from much of the public realm and given the significant weight to be attached to promoting economic growth, I consider the related benefits from the expansion of the business, including the creation of new jobs are sufficient, in this case, to outweigh the identified harm.

### **Other matters**

16. I have taken into account the objections of local residents in Redcroft and have already addressed many of these in my reasons above. However, it is also clear from the representations that there is a concern about loss of light and views. Whilst the proposal would result in an increase in the roof mass of the appeal building, because of the separation distance, I do not consider it would be so great as to have a material effect on the amount of light to properties in Redcroft. In terms of views, given the overall context, within which there is significant variation in built form, the additions to the building's roof and elevation would not unduly harm the outlook of local residents.

17. A neighbour in Rowntree Close has raised concerns about subsidence. However, this is not a planning matter and therefore not something that I can take into account in my decision.

### **Conditions**

18. I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. I have amended the Council's suggested condition relating to matching materials as these are clearly described on the approved plans but I have imposed a condition requiring the submission of details of the dormer's cladding.

### **Conclusion**

19. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal succeeds.

*Hayden Baugh-Jones*

Inspector