

Advice from Eton Conservation Area Advisory Committee: 8 June 2016

Re 12 Provost Road, Planning Application 2016/2682/P

The architects state that the roofs of the two dormer windows now on 12 Provost Road 'were forced to evolve' in the way that they did. In other words, they could really not be other than the way they are. Whether forced or not, the result led to an 'increase in the thickness of the roof build-up' which is very far from 'minimal', which is how they choose to describe their inappropriately thick hoods. A great deal of technical detail is then compiled to justify this unapproved design in order to make it seem that nothing else was possible. This argument is surely spurious.

The architects go on to say that there are dormers of 'diverse appearance and proportions' in this row of listed buildings. This is true enough, but it doesn't make the thick hoods that they decided on any more appropriate. And, equally important, the presence of these heavy hoods should be seen as adding to the other three sets of insensitively heavy dormers in the road. This way damage to a conservation area proceeds.

This Variation of Approved Drawings is eight pages long. Examples of these inappropriately heavy-handed dormers on neighbouring houses are used to support their case, including the dormers at 3 Provost Road – dormers that were built in the seventies, forty years ago. In reading these pages, what has to be borne in mind is why the architects did not agree their revisions of the original, approved design with Camden. But conservation areas exist to prevent what has already been inappropriately put in place from being repeated. The tapered cheeks referred to in this proposal, though nicely considered in themselves, do absolutely nothing to lessen the effect of the inappropriately heavy hoods. Point after point of justification/excuse is made to such a degree that the argument being made is rendered suspicious. Eight pages to justify two domestic dormer windows?

This proposal adds to the erosion of qualities in the immediate neighbourhood, and Eton CAAC feel that such erosion is becoming an increasingly destructive threat.

In the original proposal the following wording was used 'the erection of two new roof dormers to match the prevailing size of adjoining dormers'; details were later submitted stating that the new dormers would reflect the details of those at 4 Provost Road. The new dormer windows which have been installed are much larger than those of most of the others in the road and now dominate the street scene. This undermines their listing for group value. The unauthorised work seriously alters the original design, and gives a much heavier appearance to its profile.

The unauthorised work to the dormers should be revised to provide a 'sensitively designed' solution which avoids their overall increase in size in accordance with the guidance and policies contained in the Eton CAAC statement(ET28) and CPG1 para 5.11.

Nothing alters the fact that there are drawings of two dormers that Camden approved, and two different dormers that are now on the house. And again, why did the architects not consult with Camden? This application to regularise the unauthorised works, without alteration, should be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

Eton CAAC