
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2016

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 07 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/16/3152200

38 Leighton Grove, Camden, London NW5 2QP

- 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 Scott Ward against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2016/1523/P, dated 17 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a mansard roof extension and internal alterations to the 1st/2nd floor 2 bed maisonette to form 1x1 bed flat and 1x2 bed maisonette, and the redesign of the front garden to provide communal cycle and refuse storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision notice set out two reasons for refusal. The second of these relates to the absence of a legal agreement securing the car-free status of the proposal. However, the Council has indicated that the second reason for refusal can be overcome by condition, and the appellant indicates that they are satisfied with that approach. Consequently, this matter does not need to be considered in the context of this decision. The main issue therefore is as set out below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a terrace of predominantly residential buildings. To the rear, the terrace is characterised by butterfly roofs, whilst at the front, the roofs are concealed behind distinctive parapet walls. The proposal would add a mansard extension at roof level to provide additional living accommodation.
 5. The Council's document entitled 'Camden Planning Guidance – Design' (CPG, July 2015) sets out guidelines on roof alterations and extensions. It resists additions to the roof in terraces whose roofline is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions.
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6. The proposed mansard roof extension would significantly alter the appearance of the appeal site at both the front and rear elevations. I agree that it would be more difficult to view the front aspect of the development from more distant vantage points to the north and south, and I accept that trees would obscure the views from specific locations in the vicinity.
7. However, on my site visit, I was able to view the parapet wall clearly from across the street. I was also able to see the tops of chimney flues which appeared to be set further back on the roof. The mansard would be set in from the parapet wall, in line with the detailed guidance, and would slope back at an angle. Nonetheless it would be somewhat taller at its maximum height than the parapet, and would be visible from the street. It would alter the traditional form of the concealed roof, disrupting the uniform appearance of the terrace, and detracting from its overall character.
8. I accept that the new front windows would align with the existing windows below. However, the new windows would add a further element of visual complexity at roof level, detracting from the simplicity of the existing built form of the property.
9. At the rear, the development would introduce a built form which would be at odds with the traditional form of the butterfly roof. It would result in disproportionate bulk at high level, and would thus fail to appear subservient to the existing building. Whilst the back elevation of the proposal would have a minimal visual impact on the street scene, it would be prominent from the rear gardens and elevations of the properties in the vicinity.
10. Whilst the terrace containing the appeal site has undergone various alterations over the years, its architectural unity remains largely intact. The proposed roof extension would be an uncharacteristic addition, thus unacceptably harming the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CS 14 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy (November 2010), which promotes high quality places, and Policy DP24 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies (November 2010), which seeks to secure high quality design.
11. I have had regard to the other mansard developments and roof extensions in the area, particularly those on the west side of Leighton Grove. I am not aware of the planning history of those cases, or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. Nonetheless, they serve to confirm that such extensions are disruptive to the rooflines of the traditional terraces, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
12. I have been referred to the planning permissions granted at 22 and 23 Leighton Grove. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted. I therefore cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, and they have not led me to a different conclusion on the main issue.
13. I accept that the proposal would contribute to the housing supply in the area, which is an important local and national policy objective. Nonetheless, this benefit would not outweigh the harm which I have identified above. The appellant states that the poor quality existing accommodation would be refurbished as a result of the proposal. However, any necessary improvements

could be achieved independently of the appeal scheme, and so I can afford only limited weight to this matter.

14. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR