

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2016

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/16/3153785

54 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7SX

- 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 David Yeo against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2016/0822/P, dated 12 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 June 2016.
 - The development as originally proposed comprised the renovation, extension and alteration of No 54 Regents Park Road, including:
 - replacing the painted metal railings (as shown in approved planning application 2015/2786/P) with glass balustrades on the rear elevation only;
 - extending the existing stairwell rotunda on the rear elevation to 2nd floor level with a new timber framed window matching the existing windows below and the parapet line of the rotunda to match the adjacent parapet line of the 3rd floor roof terrace; and
 - re-finishing the rear elevation in white render, covering the existing brickwork.
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Preliminary matter

1. During the course of the application the proposal was amended to relate only to *the replacement of metal railings around rear balconies (approved under application No 2015/2786/P) with glass balustrades*. The use of the word *replacement* here is potentially misleading. Although other works approved by the previous permission are ongoing, the railings are not yet in place. I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that the proposal is for the installation of glass balustrades instead of the previously approved metal railings.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. 54 Regents Park Road is a handsome, semi-detached Italianate villa situated within a row of similar properties across the street from Regent's Park. The Council's Conservation Area Statement - Primrose Hill advises that such villas
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dominate the principal and secondary roads within this part of the conservation area. No 54 is aptly cited as an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

5. The rear elevations of these buildings, though clearly not as important as the frontages, are nevertheless well-detailed and well-proportioned. Although out of public view, they are visible from nearby properties and are a significant element of the character of the conservation area.
6. The current works to No 54 include a flat roof rear extension at lower ground floor level plus other alterations, in a restrained modern style that includes some larger areas of glazing. The proposed glass balustrades would enclose roof terraces on 3 levels and would also run alongside an external stair.
7. I have some sympathy with the appellant's argument that the use of glass balustrades here would be more in keeping with the modern style of the current alterations. On the other hand, the approved modern elements here are relatively modest and the addition of extensive glass balustrades would substantially increase the amount of glass on the rear elevation. In combination with the other approved changes the glass balustrades would tend to overwhelm the original architecture of the house and would not be sympathetic to the general character of the row. I note that a few other buildings in the area have glass balustrades, but the only one I saw on my site visit is much smaller and therefore has less impact.
8. The use of black metal railings as approved is much more typical of buildings in the area. Such railings would be in keeping with the Italianate style, helping to tie the new alterations into the historic architecture of the building.
9. The Council refers to another decision regarding a glass balustrade on an Italianate villa¹. In that case the balustrade would have been on the front of the building so the circumstances were much different. I have considered this proposal on its own merits.
10. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the conservation area and find no overriding public benefits. The proposal therefore conflicts with the aims of Policy CS14 of the Camden Core Strategy and Policies DP24 and DP25 of the Camden Development Policies, to ensure that development is of the highest standard of design, respects local context and preserves or enhances Camden's heritage assets.
11. The appellant suggests that a split decision could be issued, approving only the lowest of the balustrades. This would still allow the most extensive of the proposed balustrades, however, and this glazed treatment would then be at odds with the railings above. I am not satisfied that this reduced proposal would be acceptable.
12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/X5210/A/14/2228421