

A report on the Appeal of the Planning Decision  
For  
71 B Ravenshaw Street,  
London,  
NW6 1NP

Planning Application Number :  
Planning Officer :  
Date of Decision :

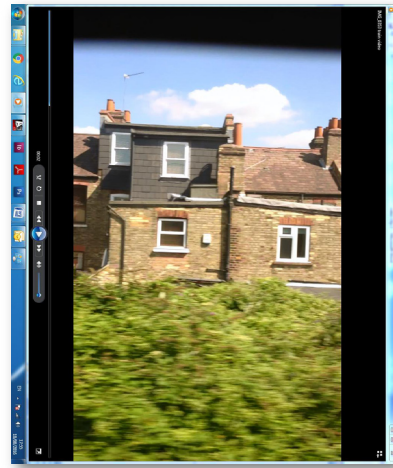
2016/0990/P  
Ms Anna Roe  
3rd June, 2016.



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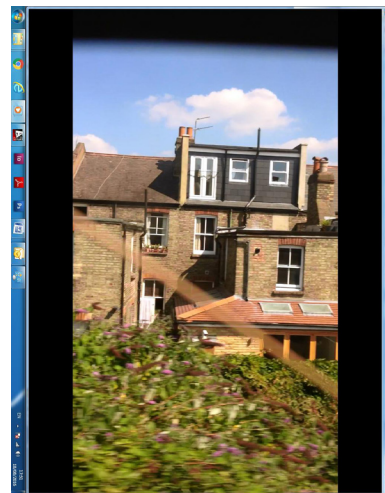
## Introduction

The property is a first floor flat in 71 Ravenshaw Street comprising of living/dining in the front part of the first floor, one bedroom at the rear, a bathroom and a separate WC with a kitchen at the rear original extension of the house. It is the upper part of a terraced house built in late Victorian times in bricks with painted stone piers at the bay. The roofs of the main house and the roof over the bay are slated. The rear extension has a flat roof and overlooks the railway lines of Silver Link trains to Luton and Watford and beyond. There are seven pairs of rail lines connecting Brighton to the South with Luton and St Albans to the North. There is a healthy crop of mature bushes and trees growing on the railway land just behind the fences providing a visual and sound barrier for the terraced properties built on Ravenshaw Street and Sumatra Road. The houses on the other side of the railway lines are not visible, as are the houses on these streets from across the railway land.



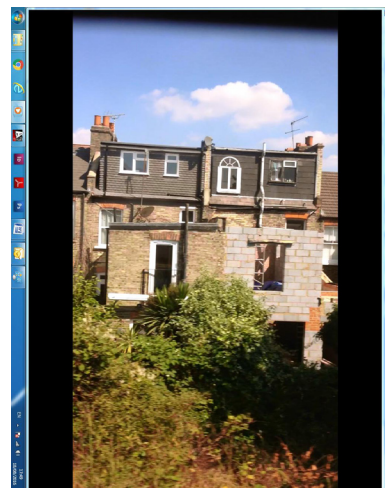
## The Application

The application has been submitted to extend the flat into the loft space and innovatively provide accommodation for living/dining/kitchen on the top floor with views across the rail from a higher level and additional bedrooms on the floor below. Currently the flat is occupied by a single mother with a child. The dormer room facing South-West will provide a bright living space with open views towards West London better suited for living room activities for a growing family. With only one bedroom in the flat the family will have to relocate to find room for the another bedroom for the child. In the current climate this will not prove to be an easy job.



## The Train Journey

The existing dormers of other houses along the terrace cannot be seen from the rear garden as the terrace curves away gently and the garden is too short to allow for long views at the rear. The only way is to jump on a train from the West Hampstead Thames Link Station on West End Lane



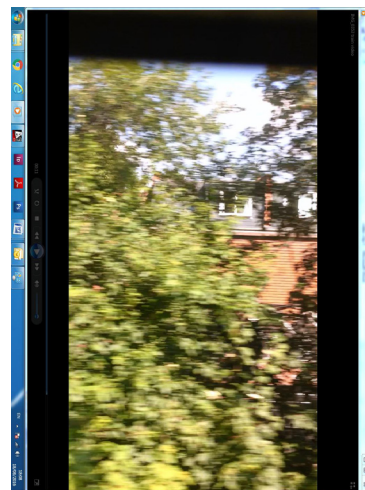
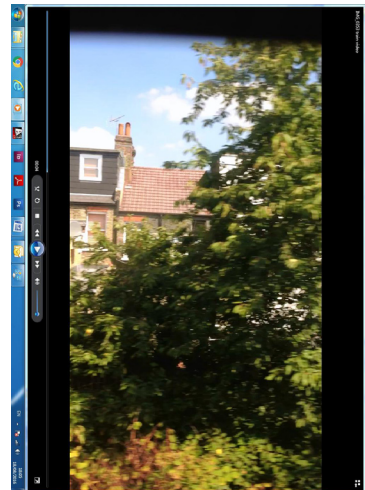
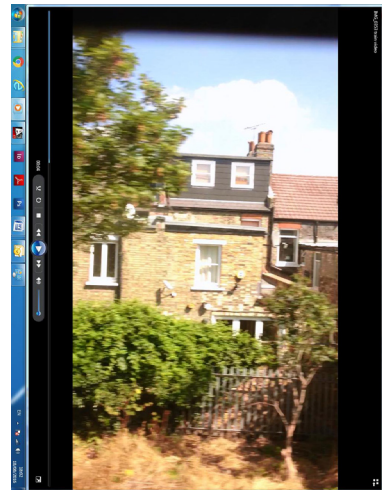
towards Watford or Luton and look through the windows. This journey was taken with a camera but as the train was moving fast the views disappeared too fast to allow one to take pictures of individual houses with dormer extensions. So, a video was taken with a mobile phone (attached on the email) and the images attached are stills 'print-screens' from the video paused several times. Some conversions could not be viewed because they were hidden behind vegetation. The length of the video is the terrace of houses along the rear of Ravenshaw Street and Sumatra Road as the train approaches West Hampstead Thames Link Station from Cricklewood Station. The illustrated examples are only a few of the developments as some are invisible through the foliage of trees. To conclude, 71 Ravenshaw Street is not an isolated example of a loft conversion but an addition to the array of full length conversions, as the planner declares in 4.2 of the Assessment. It is because of that the planners consider the development acceptable in principle.

## Assessing the Case

The proposed conversion should not have been refused for two reasons :

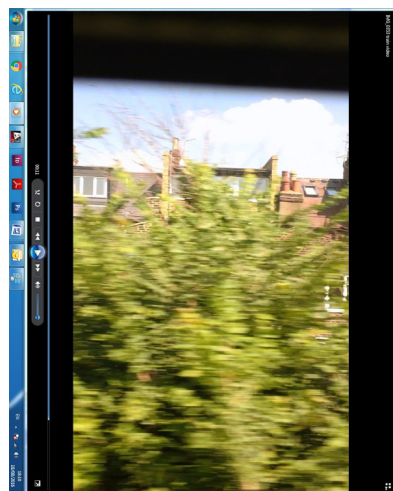
- (i) The property does not lie within an area deemed sensitive enough to be designated for conservation status, and
- (ii) the rear faces the railway lines with minimal chances of the properties been viewed either by passengers on the train or by the properties on the other side of the seven tracks' width of land.

Section 2 of the Assessment states that there was a decline by the agent to revise the scheme. In fact the development was revised with the rear window sizes changed to be smaller but the planners thought this did not meet the guidelines and would make no difference to the decision. A great number of properties have developments of similar nature causing the planners to accept that the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle. The details suggested however did not make sufficient impact to be considered improvement of the design and therefore they were not submitted as amendments to the application.



The other developments of similar mould houses to 71 Ravenshaw Street were designed in a way that do not meet the guidelines. The planners say that these houses are built under permitted development, and it is for this reason that they are acceptable. The dormer does not try to meet the guidelines because it is not possible to provide the accommodation under the existing envelope. The resulting proposal is similar to the already existing developments in similar houses.

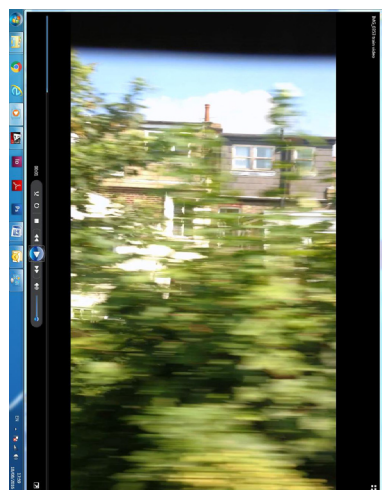
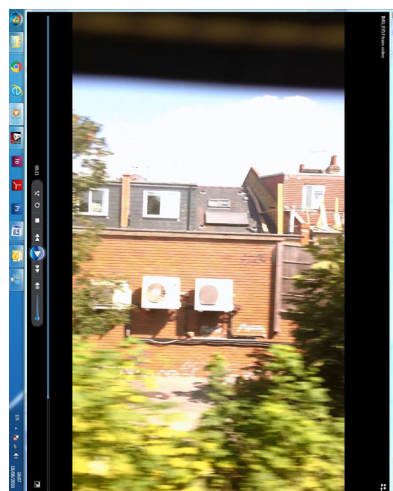
The design for this application faced the same constraints as other developments along Ravenshaw Street as the houses are of the same dimensions. How can the proposed loft conversion being acceptable in principle, while it cannot be unacceptable if it does not meet the detailed requirements in the guidelines. The same problems were encountered by the illustrated examples which formed the basis of the planner's conclusion : that the dormer is acceptable in principle.



## The Juliet Balcony

Section 5.7 of the Detailed Design focuses on the size of the fenestration. This was discussed with the planners but as the main concern was the size of the dormer, the windows, at the time, played secondary role towards making the decision and it was not fully explored. The glass rail protection to the Juliet balcony was not even raised. Should this had been raised it of little consequence if the protection is steel rails or glass. My feeling however, is that glass under the circumstances is a better solution.

The design of the Juliet balcony was considered and thought acceptable as this does not inconvenience the neighbouring properties (Summary of Consultation Responses). Sections 5.7 and 5.8 raise the point that the Juliet balcony with French doors (raised off the floor) with protection shown in glass do not relate to the facade below. The issue is that the two (French doors and glass balustrades) are non-traditional addition to the rear facade. In 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 the planner talks about the proposed dormer does not meet the guidelines (but it is considered acceptable as stated in 4.2). The planner is asking for traditional looking rails when the full width dormer, in 4.2 of the Assessment is considered acceptable, and in the midst of similar loft extensions that already exist in this terrace of houses. This does not make sense as the modern metal rails which look insubstantial and decidedly un-period, by comparison with the cast iron period rails, in the setting of the proposed dormer would look incongruous/out-of-place amongst the already existing ones in



the terrace, should the design be different to that proposed.

Considering what has been allowed along the rear of these buildings (see the AC units at the rear of the building in the photograph above) this is one of the best examples of development.

## The Conclusion

To conclude, the application should be accepted as it stands, because :

- (i) The proposal is similar to a number of existing dormers on the terrace and it is considered 'acceptable in principle'.
- (ii) The only place it can be seen is from the fast moving train and through thick foliage of trees growing on the railway land
- (iii) Any other buildings across the 7 track rails cannot view the backs of the terraced houses
- (iv) The street is not in a conservation area
- (v) The materials used on the dormer are similar to those used on the house
- (vi) The details on the dormer albeit 'non-traditional' they give the similar appearance to the existing dormers on other houses on the terrace.
- (vii) The details do not impact on the neighbouring properties by increasing the opportunity to overlook.

