

# Eton

## Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Advice from Eton Conservation Area Advisory Committee: 19.12.2016

### Re 10 Provost Road: 2016/6486/P, 2016/6595/L

There are three aspects of the application which we consider to be harmful to the Conservation Area:

1. The design and materials proposed for the rear extension
2. The roof of the side extension should not be visible from the street
3. The proposed alteration to the depth of the roof dormers; the resultant projection and harmful intrusion into the street scene.

Section 2 of the Heritage Statement which accompanies this application helpfully reminds Camden, as the local planning authority, of its the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to *'pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas'*. It is in this context that we make our comments below.

#### 1. Design and Materials for Rear and Side Extensions

The application proposes a 'metal clad rear extension' at lower ground floor level. It is described as 'a clearly modern yet discrete addition' and 'of a simple design that would not compete with or detract from the main building' (Applicant's Heritage Statement Section 4).

We do not consider that a small inelegant rectangular metal-clad structure, seemingly tacked on to the rear of a listed building, can in any way preserve or enhance either the character of 10 Provost Road or the conservation area. Nor does its design or proposed materials bear any relationship to the existing building. Furthermore, it contravenes the guidelines included in the Eton Conservation Area Statement.

Page 23 of the Eton Conservation Area Statement (under the heading Current Issues about alterations and extensions to existing dwellings) includes this general statement: *'Where extensions and alterations are permitted (including rear extensions), the quality of design will be important. Normally this will mean paying careful attention to the scale of extensions, so that they remain subordinate to the main building, and the use of materials'*.

Page 28 includes the following Guidelines for rear extensions:

- *ET22 Extensions and conservatories can alter the balance and harmony of a property or of a group of properties by insensitive scale, design or inappropriate materials. Some rear extensions, although not widely visible, so adversely affect the architectural integrity of the building to which they are attached that the character of the Conservation Area is prejudiced. Rear extensions should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area.*

- *ET23 Extensions should be in harmony with the original form and character of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings.*

The proposal has clearly ignored these guidelines and is also at odds with the Council's own good practice principles for external alterations which are set out on pages 26 and 27 of Camden Planning Guidance - Design [CPG1] which include the following:

- *Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. A harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building; in other cases closely matching materials and design details are more appropriate so as to ensure the new work blends with the old.*
- *Wherever possible you should use materials that complement the colour and texture of the materials in the existing building, see also CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials chapter). In historic areas traditional materials such as brick, stone, timber and render will usually be the most appropriate complement to the existing historic fabric; modern materials such as steel and glass may be appropriate but should be used sensitively and not dominate the existing property.*

and, on page 29, Rear extensions General principles, include the following:

- *4.10 Rear extensions should be designed to respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;*
- *4.11 Materials should be chosen that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible*

The proposal for a boxy structure 'clad in metal panelling' fails all the above tests:

- It is an insensitive design in an inappropriate material
- It is obtrusive (clad in metal) and adversely affects the character of the building
- It totally inharmonious to the form and character of the house

The Heritage Statement makes a disingenuous attempt to create a virtue out of this, referring to 'a clearly modern yet discrete addition'. We could not disagree more. Contrary to the conclusion in Section 5 of the Heritage Statement, we do not believe that it enhances the listed building nor does it preserve and appearance of the character of the Eton Conservation Area.

## **2. The Roof of the Side Extension should not be visible from the street**

A lightweight timber and glass structure is proposed to replace the perspex roofing and associated timbers on the side extension. The existing extension is not visible in views of the front of the building and it is essential that any replacement should be similarly discrete. The information provided with the application is not clear on this point.

The Eton Conservation Area Appraisal: Alterations and Extensions to Existing Buildings (p23) states *'there is some evidence of alterations and extensions to the Eton Conservation Area which can, cumulatively, cause harm to its special character. For example... [alterations]... which are clearly visible from the street need[s] to be carefully controlled. A second area of*

*concern is the scope to infill between pairs of semi-detached villas. This has the tendency to disrupt the rhythm of development in the street'*

We consider it is important that the roof of the side extension is not visible from the street to address the second area of concern raised above.

### **3. Alteration to the depth of the roof dormers**

New dormers in the roof are proposed involving the 'loss of a small amount of original roof fabric'. We are also told 'Externally, the proposed dormers would appear of similar size to dormers recently approved on the neighbouring listed buildings'.

We do not agree with this statement. Whilst the width of the existing dormers is retained, the proposal projects much further forward than those currently existing as well as the majority of the dormers on Provost Road. The buildings on Provost Road are primarily listed for their group value. Their symmetry applies equally to the roof line and the modest dormers that exist in the street scene.

The proposal also contravenes the guidelines included in the Eton Conservation Area Statement, as well as Camden's own good practice principles for external alterations set out in Camden Planning Guidance – Design [CPG1]. Page 23 of the Conservation Area Statement (under the heading Current Issues about alterations and extensions to existing dwellings) includes a general statement, as follows: *'There is some evidence of extensions and alteration within Eton Conservation Area which can, cumulatively, cause harm to its special character. For example the provision of new dormers, particularly on roof slopes which are clearly visible from the street needs to be carefully controlled.'* Guidelines for roof dormers (p28) recommends that these should be *'sensitively designed in relation to the building and other adjacent roofs.'*

The applicant, by reference to the neighbouring dormer at 12 Provost Road, has singled out an unauthorised development where the Council is taking steps to return its size to the approved scheme. Page 38 of Camden Planning Guidance - Design paragraph 5.13 that *'The presence of unsuitably designed new or altered dormers on neighbouring properties will not serve as a precedent for further development of the same kind'*.

Page 13 of the applicant's Design and Access Statement shows an elevation of the adjoining houses on Provost Road - 9/10 and 10/11- which clearly demonstrates how the oversized dormers will upset the symmetry of the roof line 9/10 Provost Road and the rhythm of the general scale of the dormers in Provost Road as a whole.

The proposal for the increase in the depth of the existing dormers fails the sensitivity test to those on adjacent roofs and in Provost Road as a whole, and should be modified to match them. 11 Provost Road is currently having to be entirely re-instated following unauthorised partial demolition: the re-instated dormers on this building should be used as a reference point.

We hope that Officers will heed our comments so that protection of the listed buildings in this Conservation Area becomes paramount, and due regard is made to the Eton Conservation Area Statement. The elevation on page 13 demonstrates the unacceptable mismatch of design in relation to rear extensions and roof dormers in houses on Provost Road which has been allowed by the Camden in recent years. These buildings are listed and to quote Section 3 of the Heritage Statement: *'No. 10 (Provost Road) has group value, and is listed together with, Nos. 1-14 Provost Road which are*

*of a matching design and form part of the setting of the Grade-II listed Church of St Saviour which was designed by EM Barry (1830-1880) and built in c.1855-6 on the north side of Provost Road'.*

To preserve the 'group value' arguably the extension should be refused outright; and there is no question that the roof dormers should not be increased in depth. Please call a halt to the creeping intrusion of alterations which harm the group value of the buildings on Provost Road.

**Eton**

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