
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2018

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/17/3185040
4 Windmill Street, London W1T 2HZ

- 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 Cosmichome Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref: 2017/2176/P, dated 23 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension at the rear to create additional office space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor extension at the rear to create additional office space at 4 Windmill Street, London W1T 2HZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 2017/2176/P, dated 23 March 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 883-EX-0S01; 883-EX-01 01; 883-EX-XX01; 883-DG-XX01 revision A; 883-DG-XX02 revision A; 883-DG-XX03; 883-DG-XX04; 883-DG-01 01 revision A; and 883-DG-02 01 revision A.
 - 3) No development shall take place until samples of all external facing materials have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Thereafter the relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a five storey terraced property forming part of a continuous perimeter block bounded by Windmill Street, Charlotte Street, Percy Street and Tottenham Court Road. The block comprises mainly of four and five storey buildings, primarily dating from the Georgian period, but with some later insertions including the appeal building and its neighbour at number 3 Windmill Street. The eastern end of the block is occupied by a large, modern, building mainly over four storeys but incorporating a further nine storey tower over part

of its footprint. At ground level the interior of the perimeter block has been almost wholly infilled by extensions to the buildings surrounding it. These form an irregular patchwork of flat roofs at multiple levels, interspersed by an assortment of parapet walls and containing a variety of skylights, roof lanterns and plant and equipment. The block as a whole is in a mixed use with commercial uses at ground floor level and residential or commercial uses on the upper floors.

4. The appeal building is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in making decisions on planning applications and appeals within a Conservation Area, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area. Paragraph 132 of National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
5. Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 (the Local Plan) expects new development to be of a high quality of design that has regard to its context and preserves or enhances the historic environment, whilst Local Plan Policy D2 seeks to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas.
6. The proposed development would see the construction of a mansard style roof, finished in metal cladding, over the existing ground floor extension to the appeal building to create an additional floor of office space.
7. It is suggested that the proposed extension is not subordinate to the original building as a result of the additional height. The appeal building is a five storey structure with a four storey stair tower projecting from the rear elevation. As the ground floor and those of the surrounding buildings have previously been extended, the rear elevation of the building reads as a four storey structure with a three storey rear addition. This is replicated on the adjoining building at number 3. From the submitted drawings it is clear that the existing ground floor extension has a larger footprint than that of the original building. Whilst the proposed extension would increase the height of the building at the rear for the full depth of this original extension, due to the height of the main building and those adjoining it, and the mansard form of the proposed extension reducing the massing of it, the resulting extension although adding to the massing at the rear would not, in my view, overwhelm the existing structure.
8. It is common ground that the proposed extension would only be visible within the interior of the perimeter block. Whilst it is not visible from the public domain, the interior of the perimeter block is part of the conservation area and the appeal site is overlooked from a large number of windows in the rear elevations of surrounding buildings. There are no second floor rear extensions of an equivalent depth to the appeal proposal within the interior of the perimeter block. However, there a variety of rear additions and extensions above first floor level to many of the surrounding buildings and there is no uniformity to the height or design of the ground floor extensions which have infilled the block's interior. This results in the interior of the block having an eclectic and heterogeneous appearance compared to its much more ordered exterior.
9. Due to the irregularity of the existing roofscape, parts of the existing flat roof to the rear of the appeal building are set at a lower level than the structures that surround it. The overall height of the extension would exceed the height of

those adjoining it, but within the context of the highly diverse interior of the perimeter block it would not appear incongruous or unduly prominent.

10. The Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2008 (CAAMP) focuses on the character and appearance of the public parts of the conservation area and does not make specific mention of areas inside perimeter blocks. Although the CAAMP states that rear extensions which would compromise the special character of historic patterns of rear elevations within a street or group of buildings will not be acceptable, the Council have not identified what, if any, particular interest or historic pattern of rear elevations within this perimeter block would be harmed by the extension. I accept that the proposed extension would alter the appearance of the lower level roofscape formed by the ground floor extensions to the buildings, however, these are all later additions to the original buildings and no historic interest or significance has been ascribed to them.
11. The proposed development would not cause harm to any features of significance to the conservation area identified in the CAAMP and due to its limited visibility, as a result of its location within the interior of an enclosed perimeter block, I find that the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the conservation area would be a neutral one that would preserve its character and appearance.
12. I have had regard to the fact that there are a number of Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the appeal site. I note that the Council has not raised any concerns in respect of the effect of the proposed development on the setting of these Listed Buildings. From what I have read and from what I saw when I visited the site, I have no reasons to reach a different conclusion in respect of this.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan which seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality of design that has regard to its context, preserves or enhances the historic environment, and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Conditions

14. I have had regard to the list of conditions suggested by the Council. In order to provide certainty in respect of what has been granted planning permission, I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans. Full details of the proposed external materials have not been provided and in order to ensure that the extension complements the existing building and those surrounding it, it is necessary to attach a condition requiring details or samples of these be submitted for approval. Due to the more sensitive location of the appeal building it is necessary that this condition be pre-commencement.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR