



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2018

by David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 June 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/18/3192785

2nd & 3rd Floor Flat, 26 Primrose Gardens, London NW3 4TN

- 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 Ms Tiffany Coppersmith-Heaven against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2017/5284/P, dated 4 October 2017, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2017.
 - The development proposed is enlargement of existing front dormer, construction of rear dormer with balcony inset into roof structure and internal remodelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building, with due regard to the Belsize Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within an imposing curved terrace of Victorian housing overlooking an elongated oval of open space which separates the site from a similar terrace opposite. The terraces are within the Belsize Conservation Area (CA) and make a positive contribution to the importance of the CA as a designated heritage asset.
5. I saw that a significant number of properties within the host terrace and that opposite had been altered at roof level, including dormer windows of varying sizes. This included dormers which extend across the full width of the front roofslope of some properties, although I saw that the appeal site and properties in this extent of the terrace had dormers of a more limited scale. In

this regard, I note that the CA Statement refers to examples of large inappropriate dormers at roof level which detract from the consistency of the terraces.

6. In relation to the **front dormer**, the proposal would involve the enlargement of the existing offset flat roofed dormer to create one of a much greater width. This would result in the creation of an excessively large dormer which would be an overdominant feature on the front roofslope of the host building. The scale and bulk of the front dormer would also detract from the hierarchy of fenestration apparent on the front elevation. In this respect, I consider that the proposal would not reflect the advice of the Camden Planning Guidance: Design (CPGD) which states that dormers should be clearly subordinate to the windows below. The scale and design of the proposed front dormer would therefore be to the detriment of the character of the host building and would not sit comfortably with the dormers of more limited dimensions on nearby properties within the terrace.
7. I acknowledge that the existing front dormer is of a relatively unsympathetic modern appearance and that the proposal would introduce a more symmetrical form of development. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that the proposed scale of dormer would have on the form of the front of the host property, particularly when viewed within the context of its immediate neighbours.
8. In relation to the **rear dormer with balcony**, the proposal would introduce a structure of a significant size into a roof slope where the plane of the roof has been largely retained, albeit subject to the insertion of rooflights. The proposal would extend across a substantial area of the rear roofslope and would appear as an overdominant addition to the rear of the building. The glass balustrade and handrail projecting above the plane of the roofslope would add to this incongruous appearance. Although views from the garden/amenity area immediately to the rear of the appeal site would be limited, I saw that the rear dormer and balcony would be readily visible from the rear communal amenity area of properties on Antrim Road.
9. The balcony would lead to the removal of part of the roof extending to almost the eaves and would substantially change the roof form to the detriment of the appearance of the host property. In this regard, I note that the proposal does not reflect the advice of the CPGD which requires that tiles or slates should be kept unbroken above the eaves. Although the appellant states that the balcony would be set back by approximately the thickness of the rear wall thereby creating an apron, I consider that this set back would in effect be minimal and would not reflect the advice of the CPGD.
10. In support of the appeal, my attention has been drawn to other properties within the terraces which contain dormers of a similar scale as the proposal. However, I saw that these are not in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site (particularly in respect of the front roofslope) and many of those that I saw served to confirm that such alterations can detract from the character and integrity of the terrace.
11. A number of parties have also referred to an appeal at 8 Primrose Gardens¹. However I do not have full details of the circumstances that led to that appeal

¹ Application Ref: 2013/1994/P. Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/13/2201252

being allowed and so cannot be certain it represents a direct parallel to the current appeal, including matters such as the scale, design and immediate site context of the proposal at the time of the appeal. I have in any event determined this appeal on its own merits.

12. I conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building and would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Whilst the harm to the CA would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits that would outweigh that harm. I am also mindful of the appellant's wish to provide greater usable internal space for family accommodation, however this private benefit would also not outweigh the identified harm. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 which seek to ensure high quality design in development which respects local context and character as well as preserving or enhancing the historic environment including conservation areas. The proposal would also be contrary to the advice of the CPGD in respect of the design of roof dormers and balconies/terraces at roof level.
13. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all material planning considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR