



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 June 2018

by **Peter D Biggers BSC Hons MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/18/3200553
132 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8JA.

- 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 Mrs Beckmann against the decision of the London Borough of Camden Council.
 - The application Ref 2018/1280/P, dated 12 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2018.
 - The development proposed is second floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and the surroundings of the terrace of properties on Gloucester Avenue and the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property sits on the north side of Gloucester Avenue in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The north side of the road is characterised by terraced houses with basements and attic floors built in a traditional style and finished in brick, painted brick or render with stucco detailing. Nos 124-134 are part of a larger terrace along the avenue but have a stepped building line following the curvature of the road. This group and the rest of the terrace, although unlisted buildings, are identified in the *Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement* (PHCAS) as buildings which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area.
4. The appeal property has already been significantly altered by a 3 storey rear extension extending from lower ground to first floor across the whole width of the property. The appeal proposal would see a flat roof extension at second floor extending across approximately 60% of the width of the property.
5. The PHCAS provides guidelines on rear extensions in the Conservation Area and, amongst other things, advises they should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area and in most cases such extensions should be no more than one storey in height. Extensions should be in harmony with the original form and character of the house.
6. It has been put to me that this is a rear elevation that is not generally visible from the public realm and which is a mixture of architectural styles and property

alterations and as such the form and design of the extension would not therefore harm the character of the Conservation Area to any significant effect. However the rear of No 132 would be both visible to passengers travelling on the railway and to pedestrians on the Regents Park Road Bridge over the railway. I accept that these views are by their nature glimpsed views but there are also closer private views of the rear of No 132. Therefore the guidance in the PHCAS is relevant.

7. The existing 3 storey rear extension, allowed on appeal, has already materially changed the rear of the property but in that it retains symmetry on the rear of the property and is largely obscured by other built form to the north it is not obtrusive in public views of the rear of No 132 and I would agree with the previous Inspector's findings (Ref APP/X5210/D/11/2161888). However, the same would not be true of the appeal proposal. It would be elevated above the surrounding built form to the north and therefore visible in the inward views that exist and would appear as a box placed at a high level on the rear of the building with little thought to the original form and character of the house. It has been put to me that the extension would be modest and would actually improve the current appearance of the rear of the property. However the cumulative effect of adding more mass at a high level would create a disproportionate and asymmetrical appearance to the rear elevation and I am therefore not persuaded by this argument despite the appellant proposing to match materials and replace a traditional sash window.
8. Even if I was to accept that the rear of No 132 was not easily visible, neither national nor local policy qualifies the requirement to enhance the character of an area by allowing any standard of design to the rear of properties simply because it cannot be seen. To do so would quickly result in cumulative harm to characterful properties such as No 132 within the Conservation Area.
9. The proposed extension would be an unsympathetic alteration to the property and would harm the significance of the Conservation Area and would fail to preserve its character. Therefore the proposal would be contrary to Paragraph 131 and 132 in the Framework and policy 7.8 of the *London Plan* which seeks to ensure that development affecting heritage assets and their settings conserves their significance by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail. The form and scale of the proposed extension in particular would be detrimental to this building of merit. It would also conflict with the Council's own policy D2 in the *London Borough of Camden Local Plan (CLP)* by failing to at least preserve the character and appearance of the area.
10. I accept that in this case the harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial and, in these circumstances, Paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that the harm is weighed against any public benefit. It has been put to me that the development and restoration of the property would better reveal the significance of the asset but in fact the effect of the extension would negate any such benefit and there is nothing to outweigh the harm to the significance of the Conservation Area from the proposal.
11. In addition to the specific statutory test regarding the Conservation Area the extension would conflict with the policy objectives of Policy 7.4 of the *London Plan* that seeks a high quality of design to allow existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place to influence the future character of the area. The proposal would also fail to meet the objectives of policy D1 of the CLP which requires extensions to consider the character, setting, context and form and scale of neighbouring buildings and the character and proportions of the existing building.

Other Matters

12. I accept that the appellant, in proposing the rear extension, is seeking to make sustainable and effective use of her home, an objective which is encouraged by the Framework. However, by definition, sustainable development can only be achieved if the social benefit, which the extension would bring in maximising floorspace for the appellant's family is not at the expense of other sustainability objectives. Paragraph 8 of the Framework states that all economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly. In terms of paragraph 9 of the Framework, and for the reasons given above, the development of the extension would not be a positive improvement in the quality of the built environment and would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the property and the terrace on Gloucester Avenue. In this case, the proposal would not therefore be sustainable development in the terms of the Framework.

Conclusion

13. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the matters before me and for the reasons above the appeal should be dismissed.

P. D. Biggers

INSPECTOR