



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2018

by Martin Chandler BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th September 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/18/3197457

52, Flat 10, The Hamptons, West End Lane, London, NW6 2NE

- 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 Mr J and Miss E Reitman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2017/4980/P, dated 4 September 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2018.
 - The development proposed was originally described as "internal alterations, conversion of existing roof space to accommodation and insertion of dormer windows and rooflights".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of a rear facing dormer window, 1no rooflight to the rear, 2no rooflights to the side, and 2no rooflights to the front at 52, Flat 10, The Hamptons, West End Lane, London, NW6 2NE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2017/4980/P, dated 4 September 2017, and the plans submitted with it, 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: 2751/03; 2751/04A; 2751/06A; 2751/07A; and 2751/08.
 - 3) Prior to the installation of the dormer window, details of the external materials, including the window frames, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development set out in the formal decision is different to that taken from the original planning application form. I have removed reference to the internal alterations and the conversion of the roof space as these are not acts of development and I note that the Council made a similar change when determining the proposal. In doing this, I am satisfied that the interests of the main parties are not compromised.
3. The Council's decision notice suggests that there is an inaccuracy in the scale of the existing and proposed plans. The appellant has responded to this point

and has confirmed that this relates to a discrepancy between the scale shown in the title block and that shown on the scale bar. The appellant has also confirmed that the scale in the title block is the correct scale and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

4. During the course of the appeal, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. Both main parties were given an opportunity to comment on any relevant implications for the appeal, and any comments received have been taken into account in my reasoning.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

6. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
7. The appeal site is located within a large and imposing detached villa that is identified as a positive contributor to the CA. It is one of 4 similar villas that front onto West End Lane and is located adjacent to the junction with Woodchurch Road. This allows for clear views towards the rear of the site when looking west.
8. Although the front and rear of the appeal building exhibit unbroken roof slopes, I observed on my site visit that the immediate surroundings of the appeal site are characterised by a variety of architectural styles which have differing roof forms. This observation is supported by the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal which confirms that the character of the CA relies significantly on the attractive, wide variety of prominent roof forms.
9. This variety includes dormer windows of different sizes and appearances on surrounding buildings. It also includes the presence of rooflights, with the north facing roofslope of the appeal building containing 3 such additions. Many of the properties that front Woodchurch Road have prominent dormer windows and the terraced houses located on West End Lane, which terminate the view from Woodchurch Road, also have pitched roof dormer windows. Moreover, I noted that a dormer window is also currently being constructed at 58 West End Lane and which is apparent from within the public realm.
10. The proposed dormer window to the rear of the appeal building, and the proposed rooflight next to it, would be prominent from Woodchurch Road. The dormer would have a flat roof which would be set down from the ridge height of the building. It would contain timber framed windows and would have lead lined cheeks. It would also be set in from the side of the roof and set back from the eaves level of the building.
11. Although the alterations would be prominent, due to the narrow width of the dormer, its limited scale and bulk, and the use of traditional materials, the dormer would not overwhelm the scale and proportions of the existing building. It would therefore represent a sensitive addition that would maintain the overall structure of the existing roof form.

12. The proposal would also install a pair of conservation rooflights within both the front and side elevations of the buildings. The rooflights to the side would replace an existing cutaway section of roof which is already an inconspicuous feature of the roof slope due to the presence of two large chimney stacks. The chimney stacks would not be altered as a result of the proposal and therefore these would continue to mask the proposed rooflights. The side rooflights would therefore be a suitably sensitive addition to the building.
13. The building is prominent in the street scene and it is a tall structure with a raised ground floor level. As a result, when viewed from the front at ground level, views towards the roof are dominated by the strong eaves line and the front roof slope is not perceptible when standing close to the building. Mature trees located to the front of the site also restrict views of the building, particularly when in leaf, as I observed on my site visit.
14. Oblique views can be gained of the building when stood towards the junction with Messina Avenue. Views towards the appeal site are also achievable further south on West End Lane. However, these would be longer distance views and the alterations to the front roof slope would be seen in the context of the surrounding roofscape in which dormer windows and rooflights are a well-established component of the character and appearance of the area.
15. The siting of the appeal building, which steps forward in the site following the curve of the road, also ensures that views from north of the site do not reveal the front roof slope. However, they do allow for glimpsed views of the existing rooflights located within the north facing elevation of the appeal building.
16. Due to the unassuming design of the proposed dormer window, and the context of the surrounding and varied roofscape, I consider that the proposed roof alterations would be sympathetic to the existing building and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. Accordingly, there is no need to weigh the effect of the proposal against public benefits as required by the Framework because there would be no harm to the CA.
17. Consequently, the proposal would accord with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017, and advice contained within Camden Planning Guidance, Design, CPG, July 2015, updated March 2018 which, taken together, require development to preserve or, where possible, enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas by securing high quality designs that are sympathetic and do not harm the character and appearance of buildings in the borough. These policies are consistent with policies in the Framework in that regard.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is allowed subject to the statutory condition limiting the validity of the permission and to a condition specifying which plans are approved and compliance with them. Due to the location of the site within the CA, a condition is also necessary requiring the details of the external materials of the proposed dormer window to be agreed with the Council.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR