



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 September 2018

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 September 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/18/3196616

Noho House, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

- 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 BC Noho Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2017/4193/P, dated 21 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2018.
 - The development proposed is the installation of new external railings around the existing lightwells on the Cleveland Street and Tottenham Street building elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of new external railings around the existing lightwells on the Cleveland Street and Tottenham Street building elevations at Noho House, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2017/4193/P, dated 21 July 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 20.201 P1; 20.271 P1; 20.272 P1 and 21.605 P1.

Main Issue

2. There are two main issues. These are whether or not the proposed development would a) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area (CSCA) and b) represent unnecessary clutter that would reduce the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Reasons

Character and Appearance – The CSCA

3. The appeal building is a grand and imposing terraced corner structure located on a prominent junction between Cleveland Street and Tottenham Street. It is a readily identifiable nodal building of some substantial presence, built in the art deco style. It is not listed but due to its design and prominence it makes a positive contribution to the CSCA. At the time of my visit the building was shrouded and construction site hoardings were in place. The appellant's

evidence however indicates sufficiently clearly the existing situation with regard to the light well treatment.

4. The proposed development would place metal railings around the existing light wells that serve the basement level. Whilst not necessarily a traditional feature of the building itself I do not subscribe to the notion that they would be harmful as a direct result.
5. The railings would be of a relatively plain and non-ornate design and there are a number in use of different styles along both Cleveland Street and Tottenham Street including an incomplete run outside the properties making up the grade II listed 16-22 Cleveland Street. The use of a basic shape and vertical emphasis reflects the same of the host building's strong exterior features. They would be of a contextually low height and due to their permeability would not detract from clear views and thus appreciation of the building as an example of its type. The existing treatment to the light wells is an, in my view, unsightly framed metal grid. The opening up of the wells as part of the scheme would eliminate this element and the rationalisation/painting of the upstands along with the much higher quality painted metal railings would improve the general appearance of the areas immediately in front of the building.
6. For these reasons, I do not find that the proposed development would be harmful to CSCA. Its character and appearance would therefore be preserved as well as some enhancement being secured. Accordingly, the appeal scheme would comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan¹. Amongst other things and along with section 16 of the Framework², these policies seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality and contextually appropriate design and appearance and does not cause harm to the historic environment.

The Pedestrian Environment

7. In refusing planning permission, the Council have also cited the effect the railings would have on the street scape insofar as them representing unnecessary clutter which would reduce the quality of the environment for pedestrians.
8. Whilst the railings would enclose previously open areas, the open areas related to light wells which are enclosed themselves with concrete upstands. The erection of the railings would reduce the width of the footway but in reality it is hard to see that pedestrians would have chosen to mount the light wells when walking past the buildings two main elevations. Indeed, with the shrouding and construction hoarding currently in place at the time of my site visit which was the middle of an average weekday, it did not strike me as having a significantly detrimental effect on the use of the footway that remained. The railings would add a built element to the street scape but a well-designed, semi permeable and unobtrusive one. Thus I do not feel there would be undue clutter.
9. With these factors in mind I do not share the Council's conclusions on there being harm to the pedestrian environment. Consequently the proposed development would not conflict with Policy T1 of the Local Plan which seeks, amongst other things, to improve the pedestrian environment, ensuring it is of a high quality and easy to navigate.

¹ The London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

² The National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Conditions

10. I have imposed the following conditions for the reasons I have given, making some changes to wording in the interests of clarity and enforceability. I have imposed the standard conditions pertaining to the usual timescale for commencement and the plans approved. This is for certainty and defining the details to which the planning permission relates. I have not imposed suggested condition 3 since the detail on the approved plans is sufficient to adequately explain the design, finish and materials to be used which, as I have set out in my findings, are acceptable.

Conclusion

11. I have had regard to all other matters raised and it is for the reasons and subject to the conditions set out above that the appeal is allowed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR