

Date: 03/10/18
Your ref:
Our ref: 2018/2866/PRE
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Dear Emil Eve Architects,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Re: 44 Ferncroft Avenue, London, NW3 7PE

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry regarding: Roof extension including a flat roof infill, the addition of two dormer windows, an inset roof terrace and conservation rooflights.

Supporting Information

Pre-Application Planning Statement Rev. A.

Site Description

The proposal relates to a top flat of a four storey detached building on the north east side of Ferncroft Avenue within the Redington Frogna Conservation Area. The property is in use as 5 separate flats.

Relevant Planning History

Related history: Flat A 44 Ferncroft Avenue

2013/5234/P Alteration and conversion of the existing ground floor flat, excavation of the existing basement and incorporation of lightwells to the front and sunken terrace to the rear, alterations and extensions to the front and rear including new front entrance door to the existing side extension, to provide 2 self-contained units comprising a 5 bedroom flat and a 1 bedroom maisonette. **Granted subject to S106 Agreement 28/05/2014**

2017/0412/P Details of landscaping and appointed engineer, as required by conditions 4 and 5 of planning permission ref 2013/5234/P (dated 28/05/2014). **Granted 16/03/2017**

Policies

The most relevant policies are listed below:

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy G1 Delivery and location of growth
Policy A1 Managing the impact of development
Policy D1 Design
Policy D2 Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG1 (Design)
CPG6 (Amenity)

London Plan 2016

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Redington and Frognal Conservation Area Statement (2004)

Proposal

The pre-application proposal includes the following development:

- Roof infill extension to provide loft accommodation
- Six roof lights to the original roof slopes and five on the new flat roof.
- Two dormer windows on the west roof slope
- An inset roof terrace with balustrade to the east elevation

Assessment

The key considerations in the assessment of this proposal are:

- Impact on the character and appearance of the host building and impact on the wider Redington and Frognal Conservation Area
- Impact on residential amenity

Ferncroft Avenue is within Sub Area Two of the Redington Frognal Conservation area, and is characterised by a variety of building types designed and built by Quennell and Hart at the turn of the 19th Century. The buildings demonstrate a variety of individual designs closely tied together by architectural form, scale, details and materials, which the conservation area statement describes as “an overall coherence of character”.

No. 44 Ferncroft Avenue features a unique design including a principle frontage two bays wide with double gabled roof, and a recessed side wing with hipped roof. The site is surrounded by a number of semi-detached properties including nos 40 and 42 adjoining the site, which are statutory listed.

The Council’s design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Proposals will be assessed against the character, setting and context of the area and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; the character and proportions of the host building, the composition of elevations, contribution to public realm and the wider historic environment.

Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will require that development respects local context and character, and preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2. Policy D2 states that the Council “will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas.”

The Redington Frogna Conservation Area Statement identifies specific incremental alterations to existing buildings that may cause harm to the area, including: inappropriate dormers or alteration to roof pitches; addition of roof terraces or balconies; inappropriate bulk, massing, design and materials. In respect of roof alterations, roof extensions are unlikely to be acceptable where “it would be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building”, and where “the roof is prominent, particularly in long views.” The guidance (RF30) states that the provision of outdoor space at roof level will be resisted.

Camden Planning Guidance states that the Council will seek to ensure that roof alterations are sympathetic and do not harm the character and appearance of buildings or the wider townscape in the borough. The guidance states that additional storeys and roof alterations are likely to be acceptable where:

- There is an established form of roof addition or alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to re-unite a group of buildings and townscape;
- Alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;
- There are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm.

Conversely, they are likely to be unacceptable where:

- Complete terraces or groups of buildings have a roofline that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions, even when a proposal involves adding to the whole terrace or group as a coordinated design;
- Buildings or terraces which have a roof line that is exposed to important London-wide and local views from public spaces;
- Buildings whose roof construction or form are unsuitable for roof additions such as shallow The building is design as complete composition where its architectural style would be undermined by any addition at roof level;
- Where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by additional extension.

CPG1 states that the assessment of roof terraces shall give consideration to: detailed design, materials, colour, overlooking, daylight, sunlight, overlooking and security. Paragraph 5.25 states that roof terraces should not adversely affect the appearance of the roof or host building; any handrails should be well set back behind the line of the roof slope and be invisible from the ground, and should not result in overlooking of habitable rooms of adjacent properties. Paragraph 5.26 states that a terrace within the slope of a pitch should not break through tiles or slates above the eaves (Fig.7), and should be no wider than a dormer opening.

CPG1 paras. 5.21-22 states that roof lights can have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of buildings and streetscapes, and may not be acceptable for properties within conservation areas with prominent roof slopes.

Roof infill

The pre-application proposal seeks to infill the area of roof within the existing hipped roof form with a flat roof to create additional internal space. The proposed infill would be visible at the rear, but would replicate the existing hipped roof form and would not have an adverse impact on the character of the host building. The flat rooflights within the proposed infill would not be visible from the surrounding conservation area and there is no objection to this element.

The pre-application also seeks to infill the area between the two gables to create additional internal space along with a roof terrace. To the front, the form of the adjacent hipped roof slope would be carried through to infill the gap between the two gables. This alteration would be set well back from the front elevation, and would therefore not detract from the significance of the double gable feature. This element in itself is considered to be sympathetic to the original design of the host building, and would not cause harm.

To the rear of the building, the proposed infill of the double gable feature with brickwork would fundamentally alter the original roof form, and would not be supported. The gables represent original features of the host building that contribute to its special interest, and are positive elements within the conservation area, and any alteration should not harm their integrity. In principle, infilling between the two gables is acceptable, subject to the original gables still remaining dominant and able to be “read”, and the detailed design.

Roof terrace

The pre-application seeks to form a roof terrace within the V of the gabled roof, in addition to cutting through the ridge of the roof on the eastern side and the installation of a privacy screen/balustrade to the edge. It is not clear from the plans and elevations whether the screen would project above the existing roof slope. In principle, the insertion of a terrace within the eastern slope of the roof would not be supported, as it would represent a non-traditional feature that would be prominent within the surrounding conservation area. The use of timber for the screen would also be an uncharacteristic addition to the roof slope and would not be supported.

CPG1 para. 5.25 states that a roof should be able to accommodate a terrace without adversely affecting the appearance of the roof or the elevation of the property, and that roof terraces should not result in the parapet height being altered or the infilling of a rear valley parapet by brickwork or railings. Roof terraces are normally only acceptable to the rear of buildings where they are least visible. The loss of the upper part of the roof slope including the ridge as proposed here would result in significant harm to the overall integrity of the original roof form. This element would not preserve or enhance either the host building or the wider conservation area, and it should be omitted from any future planning application.

Dormers

Two dormers are proposed to the west roof slope, both aligned with the windows below. There is a discrepancy in the drawings, as the dormers viewed from the front and side views do not match in size.

It is noted that there are examples of dormers within the conservation area, both original and added later; however it is also noted that many of these are within roof slopes that are taller than that of no. 44 Ferncroft Avenue, allowing dormers that are proportionately small and set within the lower half of roof slope. The west facing roof slope of the host building is prominent within the street scene, and is more sensitive to change. Owing to the limited height of the roof, the proposed dormers would appear overly dominant within the slope, and it is unlikely that this part of the roof can accommodate any dormer addition that would appear in keeping with the character of traditional dormers in the area. The smaller dormer would also fail to be sufficiently set away from the roof margins, contrary to CPG1 para. 5.11.

On this basis, the proposed dormers are considered to be harmful to the overall appearance of the host building and the character of the conservation area, contrary to policy D2, and should be omitted from any future planning application.

Roof lights

No objection is raised to the inclusion of roof lights to the flat roofs that are proposed, as they would not impact the appearance of building or surrounding area. However, the roof lights proposed to the roof slopes are considered to be unacceptable in number, location and design.

This part of the conservation area is notable for its largely uncluttered roof slopes, which feature few roof lights and any that exist are generally discrete in size. The roof lights that are proposed are large in scale and horizontally proportioned, which would appear overly dominant and incongruent in this context. They are also not aligned with the windows below, contrary to Camden Planning Guidance.

The proposed roof lights located nearest to the front of the building would be highly visible within the street scene and none of these would be supported. Similarly, the proposed roof light in the eastern roof slope towards the rear of the building is inappropriate, but a much smaller roof light may be acceptable, in picture orientation, and sited more appropriately within the roof slope. The proposed roof light to the rear elevation is largely acceptable, but should be aligned with the windows below.

Amenity

The proposal would not include any increase in roof height and would not result in a loss of daylight or sunlight. The proposed east-facing roof terrace includes a privacy screen to prevent overlooking; however, the terrace itself would create the perception of overlooking to the windows opposite, and would be an un-neighbourly addition.

Conclusion

Some degree of alteration to the roof form to allow for additional accommodation is likely to be acceptable, subject to amendments being made as described above. The elements of the proposal that are unacceptable in principle and should be omitted are: the roof dormers, the alterations to the rear gables and the inset roof terrace in the east roof slope.

Planning application information

If you submit a planning application, which addresses the outstanding issue detailed in this report satisfactorily, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form – Full planning application form
- An Ordnance Survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement
- Heritage statement
- Sample photographs/manufacturer details of external materials
- Tree report (where there are trees within the site that could be affected by development, including the storage of materials)
- The appropriate fee - £206
- Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would put up notices on or near the site and advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

It is likely that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers. For more details click [here](#).

Please note that the information contained in this letter represents an officer's opinion and is without prejudice to further consideration of this matter by the Development Control section or to the Council's formal decision.

I trust this information is of assistance. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on 020 7974 2362.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Whittredge