



The Planning Inspectorate

LB8

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M Dominitz
The Melita Hotel
76 Fordwych Road
LONDON
NW2 3TH

Appeal Dismissed
4258

Your Ref
Our Ref
T/APP/X5210/A/95/253055/P8
Date 11 OCT 1995

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPLICATION NO - PL/9401681/G3/1/2

1 I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine your appeal against the decision of the London Borough of Camden Council to refuse planning permission for alterations to the top floor to provide additional accommodation at The Melita Hotel, 76 Fordwych Road, London NW2. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council, those made by other interested persons, and those representations made directly by other interested persons to the Council which have been forwarded to me. I inspected the site and its surroundings on 13 September 1995.

2 From my consideration of these representations made, and from my visit to the site, I consider that the main issues in this case are firstly the impact of this proposal on local visual amenities, and secondly whether or not it provides a satisfactory standard of living accommodation.

3 No 76 Fordwych Road is a semi-detached Victorian house, for which an Established Use Certificate was issued in 1979 for use as a hotel. The property has 20 bedrooms, 2 of which are situated in the attic top floor. 19 bedrooms are used for letting purposes for bed and breakfast accommodation, and one is used by a house keeper. This proposal would provide 3 additional bedrooms in the attic floor by extending it across the side pitch to finish in a mansard form between the two existing chimney stacks, with a vertical dormers accommodating windows.

4 The Council have referred to design policies and guidelines in the Borough Plan and the draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which seek to ensure that new development is in keeping with its surroundings. The Council maintain that this roof extension would seriously distort the symmetry of this pair of buildings, the other half remaining unaltered, and that, as this is an area where there has generally not been extensive alterations at roof level, it would be out of keeping with the street as a whole. They acknowledge that roof extensions

have been permitted on Nos 72 and 74 adjoining, but state that the emerging UDP policies make more specific provisions for protecting roofscapes and rooflines

5 You believe that these alterations would be little seen from street level, and would have very little impact on the appearance of this building or the character of the area. You also refer to the roof extensions to Nos 72 and 74, which you consider have a greater impact than this proposal, and which you point out were both permitted since the current Borough Plan policies were adopted. You consider that this proposal would respect the form and character of the main building, with appropriate design, detailing and finishes, and that its volume would not dominate the appearance of the building.

6 With the exception of the roof extensions to Nos 72 and 74, I was not able to see any other major roof alterations in this part of Fordwych Road, most of the roofs being in their original form or with only small dormer projections, some of which may be original or of considerable age. While the height of the buildings along this road is such that the roofs are not prominently seen from street level, the largely unaltered nature of this roofscape is nevertheless a very pleasing aspect of local visual character. As such, this is an aspect which the Council's general design policies and the more specific roofscape and roofline policies in the emerging UDP seek to preserve. Although the draft UDP is still at an early stage of preparation, these policies do set out considerations to which I have accorded some weight.

7 This particular extension would in my view be of a design and bulk which is not particularly sympathetic to the existing character of this building, and which would considerably unbalance the pair of which it is a part. This would erode the character and quality of the street scene, where the roofs have generally not been the subject of such major alterations. Although this extension would not be especially prominent from street level, I am mindful that it would be widely seen from neighbouring properties both to the front and rear and take the view that good design requirements are equally applicable to such a situation as those which are more open to view from street level. It is my conclusion therefore that this proposal would cause unacceptable harm to local visual amenities.

8 In the second issue the Council have referred to their adopted standards for residential development which require a minimum floor area of 6.5 sq m for single rooms. They believe that these standards should be applied to a hotel of this type, and state that one of these proposed rooms fails to meet the standard and that others only just meet it. You query why the Council are applying a residential standard to this commercial proposal, but nevertheless acknowledge that a minimum room size of 6.5 sq m would be required according to other guidance codes for hotel/hostel accommodation, and state that the space is intended to be provided by extending a little further into the roof void. You believe that these proposed rooms would function perfectly adequately for their intended purpose and serve a clear local need for such accommodation.

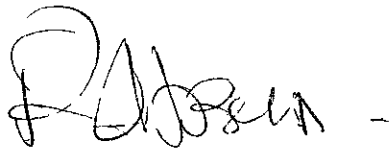
9 While it may be possible to create a floor area of 6.5 sq m for each room by extending further into the roof void, I am not satisfied from the evidence before me that this would necessarily result in a useable floor area. The ceiling height in the existing attic accommodation is only 1.7 m at the edges of the rooms and any further extension into the roof space would result in lower head room and a very cramped living space. Whilst this second issue is not a main determining one in this particular case it does seem to me that

the very cramped nature of the proposed rooms is indicative that this scheme is attempting to create too much accommodation in a limited space with the consequent problems both of visual bulk as well as cramped living space

10 I have noted the concerns expressed by a number of adjoining residents, but have found that many of the matters raised in these representations do not directly relate to this particular appeal proposal I have taken into account all other matters raised, but have found nothing which would either alter or add to the conclusions which I have reached from my consideration of this main issue above

11 For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss your appeal

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R D Hiscox', with a horizontal line underneath.

R D HISCOX MA(Oxon) DipTP ARICS MRTPI
Inspector