

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR THE ERECTION OF A THIRD FLOOR MANSARD ROOF
EXTENSION
AT 23 HEALEY STREET
LONDON NW1 8SR



93 Rock Road
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 1JG
Mobile 07985771003
e-mail peter.waller47@btinternet.com

1. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

23 Healey Street is a three storey Victorian terraced house on the east side of the street with a rear garden frontage to Grafton Crescent. The property has a valley roof and is not a listed building and not within a conservation area.

Healey Street is fairly narrow with front parapets and therefore views of mansard roof structures on buildings in the street are hidden. Mansard roof extensions are commonplace in the wider area around Healey Street.

There are views of the rear elevation of most of the houses on the east side of Healey Street from Grafton Crescent. Many have single and two storey rear extensions and balconies of various designs and materials, which is typical in many streets in the locality. The original three storey main walls of the rear elevations are constructed in yellow London Stock brickwork which is topped off by "V" shaped parapet roofs. However, there are exceptions where there are small roof extensions at 15 and 25 and additionally, permission has been granted on appeal to construct mansard roof extensions at Nos 13 and 21. Work on the construction of the latter extension has commenced

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Permission for a two-storey rear extension, first floor rear terrace, insertion of roof lights, replacement of the second floor rear UPVC window with a timber frame and converting the first-floor rear window into a door was approved in March 2016. **(2015/6912P)**
- 2.2 A second application for the demolition of an existing single storey extension, creation of a two storey rear extension, and the addition of a timber sash window in the closet wing was approved in May 2016 **(2016/1593P)** This permission is currently being implemented.
- 2.3 A third application for a two-storey rear extension, replacement of uPVC windows with timber framed units and installation of roof lights in the main roof was refused in November 2016 because its height, bulk and scale would result in harm to the character and appearance of the building, the rear elevation of the wider terrace and Grafton Crescent. **(2016/4728P)**
- 2.4 Permission was refused on Appeal for a third-floor roof extension to create additional accommodation in August 2017. The Inspector's concern was that *the extension would infill a gap between the peaks and troughs of the valley roofs. As such it would disrupt the relatively unbroken pattern which is evident at the rear of the terrace. He went on to say while the extension may not be highly prominent at ground level from immediately outside the site, it would nonetheless be seen in side views from within Grafton Crescent where its bulk and size would be more noticeable.* **(2016/1596P and APP/X5210/D/16/3154201)**

2.5 Unfortunately, the Inspector was unaware of a very relevant material consideration in arriving at his decision, which was the fact that another Inspector had allowed an appeal just a few weeks before in July 2016 for a very similar mansard roof extension at the next-door property at No 21. Had he been aware of the allowed appeal on the neighbouring property then he would have been obliged to have regard to it and given it significant weight in his decision making and might have, on balance, come to a different decision and allowed the appeal.

2.6 At No 21, the Inspector had similar circumstances of an earlier appeal decision in the vicinity of the appeal site to deal with and here he said *I am mindful that the proposed development the subject of this appeal bears similarities to the, now existing, mansard development at No 14 Healey Street, both in terms of being low in height and lightweight in appearance.* (paragraph 2)

He went on to say (paragraph 7) *During my site visit, I observed that many dwellings have been extended, and /or altered, especially to the rear, where there are numerous extensions of various shapes, sizes and form. Whilst individually striking in their own way, none of these features, either on their own or together, are so intrusive or dominant as to detract from the overall sense of uniformity provided by the terrace as a whole. Rather, they provide for a pleasing sense of interest and reflect various efforts made to make the best use of space within a dense urban area.* (paragraph 8)

During my site visit, I observed changes to the roofscape at Nos15 and 25 Healey Street.

Consequently, the proposal would be situated within an already altered roof profile, albeit, this would not lead to any significant harm. (Paragraph 11)

Due to the juxtaposition of streets in the area, the rear of Healey Street does not feature prominently in wider views, but rather, appears as a subordinate backdrop to the front of Grafton Crescent. Given this, and the wide and varied range of changes to the rear of Healey Street, I find that the proposed development would appear neither dominant nor incongruous, but instead, it would simply form one of a number of subordinate changes to the rear of the terrace. As such it would be in keeping with its surroundings. (Paragraph12)

The Inspector therefore allowed the appeal.

2.7 A further application for a third-floor extension with a pitched roof at No 23 was submitted following the allowing of the appeal for the very similar proposal at No 21 and this was refused in October 2016 (**2016/4729/P**) on the grounds that *"The proposed roof extension, by reason of its design, bulk, height and location within a terrace of largely unimpaired rooflines, would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, street scene and surrounding area".*

2.8 The Inspector at the subsequent appeal (**APP/X5210/D/16/3163096**) noted the two differing appeal decisions at Nos 21 and this site as being material considerations in the determination of this appeal. The key issue once again was the impact of the extension when viewed from the rear in Grafton Crescent. The Inspector concluded – *Although **at present** there remains a prominent and consistent*

*roofline to the rear of the terrace which is particularly important in defining the character and appearance of the row of properties and the area, generally, this would be somewhat disrupted **should** the planning permission at No 21 be implemented. (Paragraph 7) and*

I fully recognise that the proposal may be very similar to the approved development at No 21 and that the implementation of the scheme at No 21 may lead to the rhythm and pattern of the roof being broken. However, in my opinion the development and the combined effect of the two adjacent roof extensions would be particularly prominent and would dominate the local roof scape to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. (paragraph 10)

- 2.7 A further application to erect a third storey extension at No 23 (**2018/3464P**) was refused in September 2018 for similar reasons to the one refused in 2016.
- 2.8 Finally, similar proposals for third floor extensions were refused in January 2019 at Nos 25 (**2017/7058/P**) and in February 2019 at 27 (**20018/00445P**) again on the same grounds of design, bulk, height and location on a terrace of largely unimpaired rooflines, would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, street scene and surrounding area.
- 2.9 In summary, the roof extension allowed at No 21 is now being constructed and the three adjacent householders at 23, 25 and 27 have all been very recently refused permission to erect similar extensions, that would together, form a more coherent and attractive roof feature than will exist once the extension at No 21 is completed.

3. RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The most relevant section in the **NPPF** to the proposal is **Paragraph 118(e)**, which states that- *Planning policies and decisions should support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well- designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.*
- 3.2 **The Camden Plan 2017** includes the following relevant policy – **Policy D1 Design**, the relevant sections are that *the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development by respecting local context and character, comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character, integrates well with surrounding streets...and contributes positively to the street frontage. Finally, the Council will resist development of poor design that fails to*

take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

3.3 Camden Planning Guidance

Altering and Extending your Home. March 2019

Paragraph 4.1 provides specific design guidance on roof extensions, advising that

“Additional storeys and roof alterations are likely to be acceptable where:

- a) 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;
- b) Alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;
- c) 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.”

Paragraph 4.2 states : -

A roof alteration or addition is likely to be **unacceptable** in the following circumstances where there is likely to be an adverse affect on the skyline, the appearance of the building or the surrounding street scene:

- There is an unbroken run of valley roofs;
- Complete terraces or groups of buildings have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions, even when a proposal involves adding to the whole terrace or group as a co-ordinated design;
- Buildings that already have an additional storey or mansard roof;
- Buildings already higher than neighbouring properties where an additional storey would add significantly to the bulk or unbalance the architectural composition;
- Buildings 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 pitched roofs with eaves;
- Buildings designed as a complete composition where its architectural style would be undermined by any addition at roof level;

- Buildings that are part of a group where differing heights add visual interest and where a roof extension would detract from this variety of form;
- Where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by additional extension.

3.4 **Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan** includes the following relevant policy –

Policy D3: Design Principles

Applications for the development will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- a) Proposals must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the site and its context
- b) Proposals must be well integrated into their surroundings and reinforce and enhance local character,
- c) Proposals must identify and draw upon key aspects of character, or design cues from the surrounding area. Appropriate design cues include grain, building form (shape), scale, height and massing, alignment, modulation, architectural detailing, materials, public realm and boundary treatments
- d) Design innovation will be encouraged and supported where appropriate
- e) Design proposals must be of the highest quality and sustainable, using materials that complement the existing palette of materials in the surrounding buildings
- f) Proposals must enhance accessibility in buildings by taking into account barriers experienced by different user groups.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1. The proposal is to erect a third-floor mansard roof extension to the existing dwelling in a manner identical to that currently being constructed at No 21 Healey Street, next door. The roof would be faced with slates to match the existing roof finishes. The sloping roof at the front of the building is designed to prevent views of the extension from the public realm in Healey Street and in line with the extension at No 21.

The steeply pitched mansard slate roof on the Grafton Crescent frontage would be set back slightly from the parapet so as not to interfere with, or compete with, the rhythm of the “v” shaped brick parapet that is a feature of the terraced properties in Healey Street. Again, this would match that at No 21. The narrow high-level window would help to unify the roof level fenestration with that at No 21, which is identical and emphasises the light weight nature of the structure, a factor that persuaded the Inspector in the appeal at No 21 to allow the proposal.

5. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issue in this case, as in all the previous cases of third floor roof extensions at Healey Street, is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

5.1 The Council Officer's Report assessing the last application at No 23 (2018/3464/P)

said-

*2.3. Mansards are not an established roof form on Healey Street and particularly not on the east side of Healey Street where the application site is located. Neither would the application be architecturally sympathetic or retain the integrity of the roof form. The rear elevation of no's 19 – 31 are highly visible from Grafton Crescent where they read as a striking example of an unbroken run of valley roofs. The Council consider it particularly important to preserve the integrity of the roofline of this section of the terrace given its visibility from and subsequent contribution to the Grafton Crescent streetscene. Roof additions on the west side of Healey Street and further down the east side of the street have significantly less visibility and therefore cannot be understood as precedent. There are **currently** no other visible additions or alterations on no's 19-31 Healey Street and so further development would certainly cause additional harm.*

That assessment of the character of the area is no longer true, because the roof extension at No 21 is now being implemented and will, on its own, constitute a significant disruption to the unbroken run of valley roofs.

5.2 It is accepted that the Inspector in dismissing the last appeal at this site in February 2017 also said- *'in my opinion the development and the combined effect of the two adjacent roof extensions (at 21 and 23) would be particularly prominent and would dominate the local roof scape to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area'*.

However, since that decision in February 2017, apart from the implementation of the extension at No 21, two other significant material circumstances have changed.

5.3 Firstly, there has been an important change to National Planning Policy with the publication of the revised 2018 version of the NPPF which is now supportive of proposals such as this one. Paragraph **118(e)**, states that- *Planning policies and decisions should support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well- designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.*

5.4 Secondly, there have been two further applications for similar roof extensions at Nos 25 and 27 Healey Street, which were submitted in the full knowledge of the earlier Appeal refusals at No23. Whilst these have been recently refused, it must be accepted that there is now a consistent latent unmet demand for such roof extensions at the three adjacent properties to No 21 such that, if allowed, it would create, in the words of paragraph 4.1 of **Altering and Extending your Home** a *continuing the pattern of development* (which) *would help to re-unite a group of buildings and townscape*. Having spoken with the Architect who submitted the two applications for Nos 25 and 27 Healey Street, he advises that the applicants for those two properties will await the outcome of this application and if successful, they will resubmit their proposals with the aim of providing a new unified roofline to Grafton Place.

5.5 The change in National policy and the unmet demand for roof extensions at properties beyond No 23 at 25 and 27 are new circumstances that were not present when the Inspector dealing with appeal **APP/X5210/D/16/3163096** made his comment at paragraph 10 of his decision letter about the cumulative impact of two roof extensions at Nos 21 and 23. While one or two roof extensions may possibly *dominate the local roof scape to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area*, a run of four such extensions would create a totally new character that would be significantly more attractive and consistent than the single extension at No 21.

5.6 In terms of meeting the other requirements of paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 the following comments are offered: -

b) The alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form by using a traditional mansard form of appropriate height on the visually prominent Grafton Crescent frontage. Additionally, the “v shaped” brick parapet with remain as a unifying architectural feature of the terrace as a whole.

c) There are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs further along the terrace and this is being added to by the roof extension at No 21. This proposal, by copying that at No 21 will create an established pattern that Nos 25 and 27 can follow and so would not cause additional harm.

In terms of paragraph 4.2, all requirements are met: -

- There is not an unbroken run of valley roofs;
- The terrace does not have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions
- The building does not already have an additional storey or mansard roof;
- The building is not already higher than neighbouring properties;

- The building is not one which would have a roof line that is exposed to important London-wide and local views are partial in Grafton Crescent from public spaces;
- The building is not one whose roof construction or form are unsuitable for roof additions such as shallow pitched roofs with eaves;
- The building was not designed as a complete composition where its architectural style would be undermined by any addition at roof level;
- The building is not part of a group where differing heights add visual interest and where a roof extension would detract from this variety of form;
- The building is not one where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by an additional extension. Mansard roofs are common in the locality.

5.7 The roof extension has been designed to meet the requirements for mansard roofs on the rear elevation as set out in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7. The front roof slope has been designed to avoid the roof extension being visible from public viewpoints in Healey Street.

5.8 The proposal meets the relevant tests of Policy **D1** of the **Camden Local Plan 2017** in that it secures high quality design by respecting local context and character, comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character, integrates well with surrounding streets and contributes positively to the street frontage of Grafton Crescent.

6 CONCLUSION

The Council is urged to accept that the circumstances that appertained in 2017 when appeal **APP/X5210/D/16/3163096** was determined have materially changed to an extent that this proposal should now be permitted. Those new circumstance are that the roof extension at No21 has now commenced implementation thus negating the arguments that roofs in this part of Healey Street are unaltered. National Planning Advice has been introduced to specifically encourage upward extensions where it would be consistent with the prevailing height and form, which it would be, now that the extension at No 21 has begun to be built. Also proposals must meet local design policies(which it does). Finally, there is clear evidence of an unmet latent demand for such extensions on the three properties next to the extension at No 21 that would together form a coherent and far more attractive roof extension composition than the single extension at No21. The Council is strongly urged to grant permission