



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2019

**by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

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### **Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/19/3229600 106 Camden High Street, London NW1 0LU**

- 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 Y Christodoulou against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
  - The application Ref 2018/5848/P, dated 15 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2019.
  - The development proposed is the erection of a mansard roof including increasing the height of the rear parapet wall to facilitate the formation of a 2 bed maisonette at third and fourth floor levels in connection with the extensions and alterations to the building under planning permission dated 29/01/2018 (ref 2018/0180/P) for two storey rear extension at first and second floor level to enlarge two existing studio flats to one bedroom flats and replacement windows to upper floors of front elevation.
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### **Decision**

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### **Preliminary Matters**

2. For the avoidance of doubt, the description of development is taken from the appeal form and Council's decision notice as this provides a more accurate description of the development proposals than that provided on the original application form.
3. At the time of my site visit the roof of No.106 was shrouded with scaffold and sheeting, whilst this impeded some direct views of the existing roof, I am satisfied that sufficient views of the site to assess the proposals and their effects could be suitably obtained.

### **Main Issue**

4. Whether the mansard roof extension preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area (CA).

### **Reasons**

5. No 106 lies amid a continuous terrace of development on the eastern side of Camden High Street (CHS) running from Greenland Street to Pratt Street within the Camden Town Conservation Area (CA). Nos. 102-110 located at the southern end of the terrace are a group of surviving 19th century brick houses with a varying roofline but featuring common characteristics, set behind ground floor shops occupying their original garden plots. These are identified in the CA

- Appraisal and Management Strategy (AMS) as making a positive contribution to the CA - particularly in defining the early character of Camden Town. The significance of the wider CA derives from its diverse and changing architecture within the townscape arising from phases of development over the last 200 years.
6. It is of note that the full terrace reduces from five storeys at its northern end to three storeys to the south. The building lies at the point of transition from taller four storey development to three storeys. The varied roof forms to the units either side of No.106 are set behind parapet walls such that they are not readily visible from the public realm. As a consequence, the visual interpretation of height arises from the upper edge of the front parapets.
  7. The Camden Planning Guidance on altering and extending homes (CPG) acknowledges that appropriate mansards are a traditional type of roof extension to buildings with a forward parapet wall and valley roof. However, this is qualified as appropriate where mansards are an established feature within a group of buildings or townscape, consolidate roof forms, or, establish a pattern. The AMS document highlights that the CA retains many diverse historic rooflines which it is important to preserve and that changes to them can harm its historic character.
  8. There are numerous examples of original and added mansard roofs in the locality; however, none are present on the grouping of nos. 102-110. The AMS identifies that much of the uniformity of surviving terraces has been lost due to additional storeys which have broken the parapet line, and mansard roofs which have altered the roof form to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA. The document advises that such extensions may be acceptable where they consolidate or are consistent with the pattern of their group setting.
  9. The addition of the roof extension would be visible above the parapet and project about a metre above the adjacent unit to the north. To the south, the side parapet atop the flank wall would present as a step of two storeys above the adjacent unit. Although CHS sees significant variations in the heights of buildings there are few examples of upward extensions that out-compete existing development either side or interrupt the general progression of heights. The absence of similar additions to the group of houses and projection above the succession of rooflines would therefore be conspicuous by its height and isolation particularly on approach from the south. This would be at odds with the integrity of the existing succession of the roofline.
  10. Additionally, the form of the extension would accentuate its visual impact. Mansard extensions in the vicinity consistently show a steep rearward sloping face with vertical window inserts providing an increasing profile at their top edge. By virtue of the vertical forward face of the proposed roof extension and set back to provide a balcony area, the proposal would depart from this characteristic form and stand out as an incongruous element.
  11. Through a combination of interruption of the terrace's height succession, the prominent height increase and the variation to the traditional mansard roof form, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the terrace or the wider CA.

12. My attention has been drawn to the degree of variation of roof treatments within the complete terrace and the wider CA. Notwithstanding the architectural and height variations within the extended terrace, there are no directly comparable examples that would lend weight to the proposal. An example of a vertical-faced extension is present at 126, that, notwithstanding the limited available glimpses of the extension, results in poor form and visibly detracts from the character of the row. Its presence would not validate the introduction of additional atypical extensions across other parts of the roof profile.
13. Other examples of vertical extensions elsewhere in the CA relate to buildings of different ages, architectural styles and settings. No specific details of the examples are provided to make direct comparison. Whilst the wider setting does provide context and relevance; the appeal must be considered on its own planning merits.
14. Under the duty imposed under s 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the southern part of the terrace and undermine its historic significance.
15. Whilst this harm would be no greater than less than substantial within the context of Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection. I note the possible public benefits of the proposal such as the proposals would facilitate a reintroduction of active use of the upper part of the building and provide a priority size of accommodation in the locality with the AMS acknowledging that parts of the area suffer from empty or under used upper floors. However, the development would not necessarily provide a net increase in housing unit numbers nor has it been demonstrated that an alternative use or arrangement would be prejudiced should the appeal fail. On the basis of the evidence provided, the described benefits would not outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.
16. The development would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and therefore conflicts with Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 which, in part, seek to achieve similar aims.

### **Conclusion**

- 17 For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*R Hitchcock*

INSPECTOR