



Planning, Design and Heritage Statement

24 Highgate West Hill
Road, Highgate, N6 6NP
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared by WEA Planning on behalf of the applicant to support the full planning application for the alterations at roof level comprising the replacement of the existing side and the dormer extensions and the refurbishment of the existing roof terrace.

- 1.2. This statement sets out the background to the development (including planning history), the justification for the proposal and its accordence with the development plan. The statement refers to the development plans which comprise:
 - The London Plan 2016;
 - Camden Local Plan 2017
 - Highgate Neighbourhood Plan 2017
 - Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

- 1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning practice guidance to support the Framework sets out the Government's policies and how they are expected to be applied.

Site Description

- 1.4. The application site is situated within the London Borough of Camden (herein referred to as LBC) at 24 Highgate West Hill, London, N6 6NP.

- 1.5. The existing property is a five-storey (including habitable loft) semi-detached dwelling located on the western corner of Highgate West Hill. The property is sub-divided into three self-contained flats and this application relates to the upper floors maisonette occupying part of the first floor, the second floor and the loft level. The property is not a statutory listed building but is located within the Highgate Conservation area.

- 1.6. The application property is not listed but is classified as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The proposal

- 1.7. The proposal seeks full planning permission for:
“Construction of replacement side and rear dormer roof extensions. Replacement railings to roof terrace and associated alterations.”

- 1.8. Pre-application advice has been received from LBC (2019/5181/PRE). The Pre-application submission proposed works at loft level comprising of an extension to the existing side and rear dormer windows and alterations to the existing roof terrace. The principle of alterations at loft level to the building was considered acceptable although some changes to the design of the development were advised, mainly in relation to the size of the proposed side and rear dormer extension.

- 1.9. This application now proposes a reduced extension for the side dormer, the replacement of the existing rear dormer with a ‘glass box’ dormer, the refurbishment of the roof terrace and replacement of the balustrades.

- 1.10. The purpose of these alterations at roof level is to refurbish the loft level, to meet building regulations and improve the access to the existing roof terrace. The current terraces at loft and roof levels were built with low quality materials and are now dilapidated and in need of repair. The proposal is therefore a high-quality refurbishment using more modern materials which will enhance the appearance of this building within a conservation area.

- 1.11. The main considerations for this proposal are the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the property and its surrounding area and the impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenity.

- 1.12. The application submission addresses these issues and will demonstrate the development is acceptable and makes a positive contribution to this part of the borough.

Heritage

- 1.13. When determining applications for development affecting heritage assets, the LPA will apply the following principles:

- presumption in favour of the conservation and restoration of heritage assets and secure the long-term future of heritage assets. The more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption should be in favour of its conservation;
- Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification; (para 194)
- Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. (Para 200)

- 1.14. The Highgate Conservation Area has a variety of plan forms. The historic village, centred around the High Street, has a relatively random pattern of plot sizes which tends to reflect the importance of the individual properties. The Conservation Area also contains late Georgian and Victorian terraced developments which conform to a regular plot size, typical of speculative development of the period.

1.15. The whole western boundary of the Conservation Area borders Hampstead Heath that, with the wooded landscape of the northern part of Highgate West Hill forms a very rural character.

1.16. The rooflines form an important part of the conservation area's character as described in the Appraisal:

"The conservation area retains many diverse historic rooflines which it is important to preserve. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers, or inappropriate windows can harm the historic character of the roofscape and will not be acceptable"

1.17. The group of properties 23 to 26 Highgate West Hill make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and have prominent roof extensions and terraces. The group is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal:

"Nos.19-26 are a group of more ornate semi-detached villas, with more elaborate stucco decoration, string courses, overhanging eaves, hipped roofs, ironwork to the windows, coloured tile decoration (some painted white), stucco piers and low front walls. Large roof extensions and roof terraces at Nos.24, 25 and 26 mar the roofscape, and are highly visible down the hill"

Planning History

1.18. App Ref 2017/6703/P: Retention of balustrading, planting, artificial grass, access door and stairs to roof. – Certificate of Lawfulness Granted December 2017.

Similar Planning Application:

1.19. App Ref 2007/3783/P: - Enlargement of rear dormer window to form roof balcony; enlargement of side dormer; and installation of velux rooflight on front roof slope to existing flat. – at Flat 7, 23 Highgate West Hill, N6 6NP

Chapter 2

Planning Justification

2. Planning Justification

Policy Considerations

- 2.1. The decision to grant planning permission has to have regard for the policies and proposals set out in the NPPF and development plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2. In so far as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is concerned, the proposals respond to the following guidelines:

- Local authorities should ensure developments
 - “are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)” (para 127)*

The London Plan

- 2.3. Policy 7.4: Local Character

“Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area’s visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.”

- 2.4. Policy 7.6: Architecture

“Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.”

Camden Local Plan 2017

2.5. Policy A1 is entitled 'Managing the impact of development' and sets the Council's objective to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. In order to assess the impact of development, the Council will take into account visual privacy, outlook, noise and vibration levels, and odour, fumes and dust.

2.6. Policy D1 (Design) states:

"The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development: a. respects local context and character;...e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;... n. for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation."

Camden CPG 1 (Design)

2.7. Chapter 5 of the CPG responds to roof extensions and states alterations to roof dormers should be sensitive changes which maintain the overall structure of the existing form. Proposals that achieve this will be generally considered acceptable.

2.8. Paragraph 5.11 provides guidance on roof dormers specifically and states that LBC will use the following criteria to assess the acceptability of dormer roof extensions:

- a) *"The pitch of the existing roof is sufficient to allow adequate habitable space without the creation of disproportionately large dormers or raising the roof ridge. Dormers should not be introduced to shallow pitched roofs.*
- b) *Dormers should not be introduced where they cut through the roof ridge or the sloped edge of a hipped roof. They should also be sufficiently below the ridge of the roof in order to avoid projecting into the roofline when viewed*

from a distance. Usually a 500mm gap is required between the dormer and the ridge or hip to maintain this separation (see Figure 4). Full-length dormers, on both the front and rear of the property, will be discouraged to minimise the prominence of these structures.

- c) Dormers should not be introduced where they interrupt an unbroken roofscape*
- d) In number, form, scale and pane size, the dormer and window should relate to the façade below and the surface area of the roof. They should appear as separate small projections on the roof surface. They should generally be aligned with windows on the lower floors and be of a size that is clearly subordinate to the windows below. In some very narrow frontage houses, a single dormer placed centrally may be preferable (see Figure 4). It is important to ensure the dormer sides (“cheeks”) are no wider than the structure requires as this can give an overly dominant appearance. Deep fascias and eaves gutters should be avoided.*
- e) Where buildings have a parapet the lower edge of the dormer should be located below the parapet line (see Figure 4)*
- f) Materials should complement the main building and the wider townscape and the use of traditional materials such as timber, lead and hanging tiles are preferred.”*

Highgate Neighbourhood Plan 2017

- 2.9. Policy DH2 of the Neighbourhood Plan is entitled ‘Development Proposals in Highgate’s Conservation Areas’ and requires all development proposals to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Highgate’s conservation areas.

- 2.10. With regards to roof extensions specifically, Policy DH5 is the most relevant and requires roof extensions to *“respect the existing roof form in terms of design, scale, materials and detail”*
- 2.11. When considering the design of a roof extension, the guidance stipulates roof extensions should *“be restricted to the rear except where they are part of the established local character and a new extension or dormer would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area or the significance of heritage assets; re-roofing materials should avoid use of inappropriate substitute materials that can erode the character and appearance of buildings and areas”*.

Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management

- 2.12. Regarding roof alterations and extensions, the conservation area appraisal states: *“The Conservation Area retains many diverse historic rooflines which it is important to preserve. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers, or inappropriate windows can harm the historic character of the roofscape and will not be acceptable.”*

Justification for the Proposal

- 2.13. The main considerations for this proposal application are:
- Design and appearance of the development
 - Amenity impacts to neighbouring properties

High quality design

- 2.14. Regarding the materials, the proposed roof extension matches with the property’s original design and appearance. The side dormer’s cheeks would be tiled to match the colour and materials of the original roof, while the proposed window

would be located on the rear elevation so as to not be visible when viewed from the street.

- 2.15. The proposed rear dormer would simply replace the existing dormer. The proposed glass box dormer would have a modern and very discrete appearance which will blend well into the host building and enhance its general appearance and character when viewed from the rear.
- 2.16. Regarding the roof terrace, the access stairs would be relocated inside the loft. The terrace would be accessed via a hatch in the roof. The existing aluminum balustrade is proposed to be replaced with a new conservation-style black metal balustrade which will improve the appearance of the property. This part of the proposed development was considered acceptable by the case officer at pre-application stage.
- 2.17. The high-quality design and material will create a quality urban environment that respects and enhances its townscape context and heritage assets.

Visual Impact of the proposed development

- 2.18. The proposed replacement side dormer will improve the external appearance of the property. The current side dormer sits forward of the roof slope and is not set back from the edge of the hip of the roof.
- 2.19. The proposed dormer will reinstate an element of symmetry for the side elevation of the building. It will be set away from the front elevation of the property and be set in from both edges of the hipped roof slope. The proposed dormer would improve the appearance of the building and will be a sympathetic addition when compared to the existing roof extension.

- 2.20. With regards to the set in from the ridge line of the original roof, the proposed dormer would be set in 228mm from the ridge line. The existing side dormer is currently set in lower than the proposed but this results in an internal height of only 1.8m which cannot be considered habitable. It should be noted that the existing and lawful rear dormer is currently positioned with a 228mm set in from the ridge line. The proposal will therefore create a more balanced appearance by setting both dormers 228mm from the ridge line of the roof and create an improved habitable space for this top floor flat.
- 2.21. It is noted that the proposed side dormer is not set in by 50cm as “usually” required by Camden’s Design Guide CPG1. However, this criteria only applies to dormers which are “introduced” to unaltered roof slopes. There is a pre-existing side dormer on site benefitting from a Certificate of Lawfulness (ref 2017/6703/P) so the roof of the application property is not unbroken/unaltered. The proposed replacement side dormer would therefore not be an “introduced” feature to the property and the set-in criteria set out in para 5.11 b) would not apply in this instance.
- 2.22. To the rear of the property, the proposed development would replace the existing rear extension with a glazed ‘box’ extension of the same footprint. The current extension is of a poor design and appearance, with a felt-covered roof. The proposed glazed structure would have a both modern and discrete appearance that will enhance the appearance and improve the character of the rear elevation of the property. The proposed extension would also allow for a greater amount of light to enter the applicant’s open plan kitchen-living room. This aspect of the proposal was considered acceptable by the officer at pre-application stage.
- 2.23. Lastly, the replacement of the existing balustrade with high-spec black metal railings for both the rear terrace and the larger rooftop terrace will significantly

improve the appearance of the building when viewed from the street. Following the advice received from LBC, the replacement balustrade would be set in 250mm from the edges of the terrace. This would further reduce the visual prominence of the roof terrace when viewed from Highgate West Hill.

2.24. Overall, the proposed development will improve the living conditions in the flat for the applicant's family while enhancing the appearance of the building.

2.25. As such, the proposed development is compliant with policy D1 of the Local Plan and Policies DH2 and DH5 of the Neighbourhood Plan and should therefore be considered acceptable.

Amenity Impacts to neighbouring properties

2.26. The potential impact of the roof extension in terms of privacy and overlooking was considered at the design stage. Due to the size and scale of the dormers and roof terraces extension as built, the development is not considered to result in harmful overshadowing, over-dominance or loss of outlook for the neighbouring properties. The windows look onto Millfield Place and therefore does not result in any overlooking or loss of privacy for the neighbouring properties. This was confirmed by the officer at Pre-Application stage.

2.27. As such, the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties. The development would therefore comply with policy A1 and should be approved on this basis.

Chapter 3

Conclusion

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The proposed development should be seen in the context of scale, design, materiality, functionality and sustainability.
- 3.2. The proposed development should be seen in the context of the pre-application advice received from LBC that has been taken into account in designing the proposal.
- 3.3. The planning permission is required to renovate the existing loft level and roof terrace of the property. The side dormer will be repositioned centrally in the side elevation of the building, the rear roof extensions is proposed to be replaced with a glass box of the same dimensions and the roof terrace will be refurbished with black painted metal railings.
- 3.4. This proposal should be assessed in the context of the dilapidated state of the existing roof extension and terraces at the application site. It should be treated as an improvement and enhancement of the appearance of a heritage designated site.
- 3.5. The benefits of the proposal are summarised below:
 - The proposal does not harm the character of the existing building and area.
 - The proposal enhances the character and appearance of the host property by using the appropriate materials.
 - The proposal will result in no harm to the amenity or privacy of neighbouring properties

- 3.6. All the aspects of the proposal are supported by the guidelines set out within national and local development framework. The proposal is also compliant with Camden's Local Plan Policies A1 and D1, as well as with Policies DH2 and DH5 of the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan.

- 3.7. The design, the high-quality architecture and the materials enhance the character of the parent building and improves the living conditions of the occupiers. Therefore, the proposal should be granted permission.