



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by **N Holdsworth MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/19/3232175

13 Tottenham Mews, London, W1T 4AQ

- 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 Chalfords Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2019/1124/P, dated 27 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2019
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey roof-top extension to facilitate the provision of additional B1 (a) floorspace.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The effect on
 - The character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, including the Charlotte Street Conservation Area;
 - Vehicular parking on the surrounding road network; and
 - The living environment for neighbouring occupants during the construction process.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. This brick faced office building sits at the end of Tottenham Mews, a densely built up road in Central London. It is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, a predominantly commercial district with 18th Century origins. Its special character and significance is derived from an eclectic variety of buildings representing the gradual commercial evolution of the area. Within this context Tottenham Mews largely exhibits brick and render faced buildings with large openings at ground floor level, some with recessed roof storeys.
4. The proposal involves the construction of an additional roof storey above the existing building. However, unlike other buildings along the road, it would not be set back or recessed. In consequence, the extended building would appear noticeably higher than other buildings along this road, when viewed from street level.

5. The extended part of the building would reflect the horizontal emphasis of the host building and its existing pattern of window openings. However, the choice of zinc as a facing material for the extension would lead to an abrupt visual change at top floor level. The zinc clad extension would rise vertically beside the brick parapet walls at the top of the building, diminishing their existing visual function as a terminating feature of this flat roofed building.
6. In consequence, the extension would jar with the remainder of the host building and its visual integrity would be undermined. The additional height, in combination with the materials used, would result in the creation of an extended building which appears incongruous and unduly prominent in relation to its surroundings.
7. Accordingly, there would be unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. Furthermore, as a consequence of its discordant appearance, the extended building also would also fail to preserve or enhance the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 ("Local Plan") which, amongst other things seeks high quality design that preserves and, where appropriate, enhances Camden's heritage assets. The harm to the Charlotte Street Conservation Area would be less than substantial. The National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") requires that such harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This is a matter to which I will return in the Planning Balance section.

Vehicular Parking

8. Policy T2 of the Local Plan states that the Council will require all new developments in the borough to be car free. It goes on to state that it will not issue on-street or on-site parking permits in connection with new developments and will use legal agreements to ensure that future occupants are aware of this position. This is to, amongst other things, reduce air pollution and improve the attractiveness of the area for walking and cycling.
9. The appellant advises they would not agree to such restrictions and cite instances where the Council have not applied the aforementioned provisions of the Local Plan. However, this site is located close to public transport links, and no convincing evidence is advanced to explain why future occupants of the office space would need car parking permits.
10. In these circumstances the lack of a mechanism to prevent future occupants from applying for parking permits means that the proposal could lead to an increase in vehicular movements and parking around the site. It therefore conflicts with policy T2 of the Local Plan, the purposes of which are set out above, and policy DM1 of the same plan which seeks to secure appropriate scheme implementation.

Living environment

11. The site is located close to residential flats. Access to it is highly constrained given that it is located on a narrow road in a densely built up environment. In these circumstances there is the potential for considerable disruption through construction activity and associated traffic. A construction management plan would therefore be justified, in the interests of securing an acceptable living environment for neighbouring occupants throughout the construction process.

12. No construction management plan was provided. Whilst such plans are not always necessary where new development is proposed, for the reasons set out above, one would clearly be justified here. The fact that the Council has not required such plans to be provided on similar development in the surrounding area does not outweigh this finding.
13. Accordingly, in the absence of such a plan, or a mechanism to secure one, the proposal conflicts with policies A1, T4 and DM1 of the Local Plan. These policies seek to, amongst other things, ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours are protected including during the construction phase, and to promote the sustainable movement of goods and materials.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

14. The proposal would provide additional office accommodation in a highly sustainable, central London location. This is encouraged by planning policies set out in the London Plan (2016) and the Framework, in addition to other policies set out in the Local Plan and supplementary planning guidance prepared by the Council¹, which I have had regard to in my assessment of this case. The additional employment floorspace would be potentially attractive to small and micro-businesses, helping to stimulate economic growth and development. These are public benefits which weigh in favour of the development. However, they do not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, and the other harm identified.
15. The Council also suggest that the proposal would be overbearing in relation to Bedford Passage. However, this passageway is already heavily enclosed by the existing building. In this respect, the single additional roof storey would not appear unduly overbearing.
16. Details of various other planning decisions are provided. A roof extension to 11-12 Tottenham Mews was allowed at appeal in 2013², however in this case the roof storey appears as a recessed, secondary storey. Consequently, it is not directly comparable to the proposal before me. Whilst the Council has granted planning permissions for large buildings and box-like roof extensions around the site, in this case, for the reasons given above, the design would be inappropriate given the characteristics of this particular building, and the refusal of planning permission is justified.
17. The lack of objections is not a consideration that weighs in favour of the proposed development.

Conclusion

18. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no other considerations that outweigh this finding. The appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR

¹ As cited in the Planning Statement.

² APP/X5210/A/13/2192844