



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 November 2021

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/21/3281940

8 Priory Road, London NW6 4SG

- 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 Mrs Catherine Rodgers against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2021/1843/P, dated 4 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Priory Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Priory Road Conservation Area (PCA), which from the information before me, and my own observations, derives its significance from the cohesive architectural quality and materials of its Victorian, Italianate style of buildings which give it a distinctive historic character. I have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the PCA.
4. The appeal building is one of two pairs of three-storey, semi-detached, stuccoed villas located on the inside bend at the entrance to Priory Road from Belsize Road. Despite some minor differences in window detailing and railings, these pairs of semi-detached villas display a strong sense of balance in their architectural form and composition, including through the flat topped porches to both sides. Camden's Priory Road Conservation Area Statement notes that these properties form a prominent entrance into the PCA, and are identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the PCA.
5. The proposal is for a conservatory-style extension above the side porch. I note that the intention is for the structure to have a light-weight appearance and a hipped roof to reflect the roof pitch of the main building. Nonetheless, it would be untypical for such a glazed structure to have an elevated siting at the side of the building. Moreover, it would unacceptably detract from the balanced composition of the building, which is one of its key features. The harm would be exacerbated by the use of uPVC frames, which is fundamentally a non-authentic material for a building of this age and character and would, in itself, further erode the traditional characteristics and historic integrity of the

appeal building and the positive contribution it makes to the significance of the PCA as a whole.

6. I acknowledge that the roadside trees may offer some screening of the property during the summer months. However, the trees appear to be subject to regular heavy pollarding, such that the development would likely remain clearly visible from the streetscene for more than just a few months of the year. In any case, heritage assets, such as the PCA, should be safeguarded irrespective of whether the development would be prominent from public vantage points.
7. My attention was drawn to the presence of other uPVC windows and structures within the PCA, but these are very much in the minority and do not represent a defining characteristic of the area. Furthermore, the conservatory at No 3 is located at ground level and behind a side projection so is not comparable to the appeal scheme. Similarly, other forms of development referred to both within and outside the PCA are of a different nature and therefore have limited bearing on the outcome of this appeal which I have, in any event, determined on its own merits.
8. Overall, the development would be an incongruous addition to the building and would cause moderate harm to the significance of the PCA. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the PCA. The proposal would also conflict with Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017, which require new development to protect and/or enhance local character and the historic environment, including the buildings and features which make a positive contribution to it.
9. In the language of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm to the PCA would be 'less than substantial', but that is nevertheless a matter of considerable importance and weight. I can fully understand the appellant's desire to make year-round use of the balcony area above the porch, and I recognise the relaxation benefits such an area may bring in times where the occupiers may be spending more time working at home. However, these are private rather than public benefits and carry no more than limited weight in favour of the proposal. Consequently, the benefits identified would not outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

10. Given the above, the development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the PCA. It would not accord with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no considerations, including the Framework, to outweigh that finding. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR