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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 25 June 2019

**by Adrian Caines BSc(Hons) MSc TP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 22 July 2019**

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### **Appeal A - Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/19/3225322**

#### **73 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JQ**

- 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 Chris Jones (Pearl and Coutts) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
  - The application Ref 2018/0927/P, dated 21 February 2018, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2018.
  - The development proposed is erection of a single storey roof extension to the existing 5-storey building to provide 1 no. 2 bedroom apartment, plus facade improvements and internal alterations to existing 4th-floor apartment.
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### **Appeal B - Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/19/3225323**

#### **73 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JQ**

- 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 Chris Jones (Pearl and Coutts) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
  - The application Ref 2018/5779/P, dated 16 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2019.
  - The development proposed is erection of a single storey mansard roof extension to the existing 5-storey building to provide 1 no. 2 bedroom apartment, plus facade improvements and internal alterations to existing 4th-floor apartment.
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### **Decision**

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

### **Procedural Matter**

3. These appeals are for similar development on the same site. Although I have concluded that it is appropriate to consider them together to avoid duplication, each appeal is considered on its own merits.

### **Main Issues**

4. The main issues in both these appeals are:
  - Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area; and
  - Whether the development would accord with local policy with regard to parking provision.

## Reasons

### *Conservation Area – Appeals A and B*

5. The site lies within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area (HGCA). The HGCA Appraisal (CA Appraisal) states that the historic character of the area derives largely from its many robustly detailed industrial, commercial and residential buildings of the late nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries. It is however recognised that the character is not dominated by one single period or style of building, which may present opportunities for high quality design, providing it respects the host building and streetscape in terms of scale, height or elevational treatment and improves the character of the area.
6. No 73 is a prominent 5 storey, dual fronted building on the corner of Farringdon Road and St Cross Street. It belongs to a group of late nineteenth-century former commercial premises comprising 39-73 Farringdon Road. The buildings feature shop frontages at road level with attractively-articulated brick facades above. The consistency and detailing in the window hierarchy, mouldings, pilasters and parapet corncicing are important features of the architectural integrity and composition of the buildings. The CA Appraisal identifies Nos 39-73 as an “impressive run” making a positive contribution to the CA. On the basis of the information before me and my own observations on my site visit, I see no reason to disagree with the conclusions of the CA Appraisal. I conclude that the significance of No 73 is derived from the positive contribution to the HGCA made by its own historic fabric and detailing, as well as its contribution to the character and appearance of the wider area.

### *Appeal A*

7. This would comprise an additional storey housed within an outer framework of bronze-coloured metal louvers and cladding with full height glazing behind, which the appellant intends to be read as a continuous abstract, rather than a typically detailed additional storey.
8. I observed other upward-extended corner buildings in the area, including of a more contemporary nature, but this is generally achieved through a facade regression behind the parapet. Such an approach helps to reduce the bulk and prominence of the upper floor and retains the primacy and character of the main building. In contrast, the proposed scheme would be built directly up from the parapet wall. This would result in it having an almost distended appearance, thereby imposing itself as a dominant addition on the top of the building. The contrasting design and materials juxtaposed directly above the parapet corncicing detail would lack subtlety and further reinforce the dominance of the development over the main building.
9. In addition, the unbroken pattern of closely-spaced louvers wrapping around the building, in combination with the absence of any distinguishable openings behind, would be at odds with the present window hierarchy of the building and its well-balanced pattern of windows and pilasters. This would significantly harm the balance and composition of the existing facades and appear out of character with the area generally.

### *Appeal B.*

10. This additional storey would be contained within a metal standing seam, mansard-style roof containing dormer windows. Although there would be a

small set-back from the parapet edge, it would be insufficient to minimise the bulk and prominence of the development. The height and bulk of the development, further accentuated by the higher new dividing wall, would not be sympathetic to the pattern of diminishing horizontal proportions of the floors in the existing building and would appear as a dominant addition that would fundamentally alter the character of the building.

11. Furthermore, the Farringdon Road frontage has its existing windows in rows of four and the St Cross Street frontage has its existing windows in rows of three distinct uniform pairs. Whilst the dormer windows would be aligned with the existing windows below, they would not follow the same pattern. I appreciate this may be dictated by the proposed roof form, but because the development would be so prominent, it would disrupt the rhythm and composition of the existing facades to further add to the harm identified above.

#### *Appeals A and B*

12. In both appeals, these harmful impacts would be highly evident from Farringdon Road, particularly when looking south at the point where both the Farringdon Road and St Cross Street elevations are seen together, and in the views east down St Cross Street.
13. Overall, notwithstanding the different designs in Appeal and B, each scheme would be a prominent and visually dominant feature on the top of the building, paying insufficient respect to its character and the positive features that it possesses. As a result, the architectural integrity and appreciation of the design and proportions of the building, including as a group, would be unacceptably eroded causing harm to the character and appearance of the building as a whole.
14. I agree with the Inspector for a previous appeal on this site<sup>1</sup>, that the adjoining mansard extensions to the south do not contribute positively to the building and are therefore not justification to allow further unacceptable development. I also agree with that Inspector, that whatever merits there may generally be in having a taller corner building, the higher floors and parapet present in No 73 already differentiates it from the rest of the group. Nevertheless, I have considered each appeal on its own merits.
15. I therefore conclude on both Appeal A and B, that the bulk, design and prominence of each of the proposed schemes would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building and area. As a result, both proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the HGCA. This is contrary to Policies D1(Design) and D2(Heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 (LP). Collectively, these policies seek high quality design, which preserves, or where possible, enhances the historic environment.
16. This harm to the HGCA as a designated heritage asset would be classed as less than substantial in the terms of paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and is therefore required to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, in accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework.

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<sup>1</sup> ref: APP/X5210/A/08/2080749

17. I have not been referred to any specific aspects of the proposals as constituting public benefits, although I acknowledge that both appeal schemes would contribute to delivering a choice of homes in an accessible area. However, this benefit would be limited as a result of only one private unit being provided and therefore would not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified above. The harmful elements of the schemes therefore conflict with the Framework, which directs, at paragraph 193, that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, irrespective of the degree of harm identified.

*Parking – Appeals A and B*

18. LP Policy T2 requires the development to be car-free, that is, to ensure that no parking spaces are provided other than those required for disabled people, and businesses and services reliant on parking.
19. The appellant has not disputed the need for an obligation to ensure that future occupants are aware that they are not entitled to on-street parking permits. I am satisfied that such an obligation would support the provisions of LP Policy T2. The appellant appears to have been working with the Council very late in the appeal process to address this matter. However, a completed obligation has not been provided.
20. In the absence of any obligation to secure the developments as car free housing, the proposals are contrary to LP Policy T2, as set out above.

**Conclusion – Appeals A and B**

21. Consequently, for the reasons above, I conclude that the proposals would fail to accord with relevant policies of the development plan and the Framework, and that therefore both appeals should be dismissed.

*Adrian Caines*

INSPECTOR