

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 September 2016

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/Y/16/3149668

Upper Maisonette, 31 Wharton Street, London, N1 3QP.

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Gianpaul Becci against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/0549/LBC, dated 8 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2016.
 - The works proposed are described as enlargement of existing roof extension and internal alterations at first and second floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the enlargement of existing roof extension and internal alterations at first and second floor at Upper Maisonette, 31 Wharton Street, London, N1 3QP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. Ref P2016/0549/LBC, dated 8 February 2016 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Procedural matters

2. Planning permission was granted for the proposed development, now the subject of this appeal under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, by the Council, its reference P2016/0497/FUL.
3. The appeal site is located in the New River Conservation Area. I am required therefore to take account of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Therefore, although not a reason for refusal, I shall nevertheless, as I am required to do, consider this as one of the main issues in this appeal.

Main Issue

4. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of 31 Wharton Street listed grade II, its setting and whether the works would serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the New River Conservation Area.
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Reasons

5. The property the subject of this appeal, 31 Wharton Street, is listed grade II and located in the New River Conservation Area. According to the list description the terrace of semi-detached linked villas, of which this is one, was probably laid out in 1832.
6. In my view, the property's special architectural and historic interest relates to the history of its development, its design and detailing, its setting as part of the terrace and the fact, despite earlier roof alterations, the front pediment and rear parapet have been retained to clearly define the form of the historic roof behind.
7. As I observed the existing pediments of the street façades and the majority of the parapet walls to the rear elevations have been retained unaltered. However, any number of the mono-pitched roofs nearby have been altered and extended to some extent and these works are clearly visible from the public realm. Nevertheless, overall, the form of the original historic roofs remain discernable from the street and rear gardens by reason of the retained pediments and parapets.
8. The appellant proposes enlarging the existing roof extension along with internal alterations at first and second floor level. As the existing cloakroom and bathroom at second floor level are accessed by way of a steep stair, the proposed works would allow for the reordering of the rooms to create a more accessible family bathroom, for the elderly or infirm, at first floor level.
9. The Council has acknowledged that the fabric of the roof may not be original and therefore the proposed works would not result in the loss of historic fabric. However, save for the small addition that forms the roof over the existing bathroom and an existing modern 'velux' roof window over the second floor landing, the form of the existing roof generally remains intact.
10. The proposed works would result in an enlargement of the existing roof extension towards the rear of the property. However, the existing roof form would be retained immediately behind the front pediment and the rear parapet, both of which would also remain unaltered. I do not consider, therefore, that the proposed alterations to the roof would be any more noticeable from the street than the existing extension and considerably less prominent than some neighbouring roof additions. Having regard to the appellant's proposal to set the roof addition in from the rear parapet, the proposal, in my opinion, would not impact on the existing rhythm of the parapets when viewed from either the rear gardens or the properties in Lloyd Baker Street. Accordingly, although the extension might be slightly more visible from the public realm than the existing, I nevertheless consider that the works of alteration to the roof would have a neutral impact on the conservation area.
11. The proposed works would result in a reduction in the area of the existing mono-pitched roof. However, its original historic form would nevertheless be clear, by reason of the design of the addition that would serve to retain sections of the original roof form and, more particularly, the building's parapet and pediment. Further, if the extension were clad in a contrasting material to the existing slate roof as proposed it would read as a contemporary intervention, thereby reinforcing the evidence of the section of historic roof form retained.

12. I accept that the other alterations to the roofs of the various properties within the terrace may not necessarily form part of its special architectural and historic interest. Indeed the integrity and authenticity of a listed building can be substantially harmed over time by the cumulative impact of works that may individually cause only minor harm. Nevertheless, I do not consider that this extension would exacerbate to any significant extent the harm that earlier works may have caused to this building, the group of listed buildings or indeed the wider conservation area.
13. On balance, therefore, I conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed works would not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of 31 Wharton Street, listed grade II, or its setting and would, by reason of its neutral impact, preserve the character of the conservation area. They would therefore accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2011, Policy CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy (Adopted February 2011), Policy DM2.3 of Islington's Development Management Policies (Adopted June 2013) and the Islington Urban Design Guide 2006 as they relate to the quality of development, the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Conditions

14. The conditions follow from those suggested by the Council. In order to ensure a high quality development I have included a condition about finishes.
15. I agree with the Council that traditional metal conservation rooflights would be the most appropriate form of rooflight here. However, as there are any number of different styles and finishes on the market, I consider that the design and finish should be approved before installation. I will therefore make this a pre-commencement condition.
16. The Council has suggested that the roof extension should be clad in natural slate. However, given the shallow pitch of the roof extension and a desire to visually emphasise the historic form of the mono pitch roof, I consider that zinc sheeting to match that at number 32 Wharton Street, as shown on the drawings, would be a more architecturally appropriate cladding for what would be a contrasting modern intervention. I shall therefore not include the Council's suggested condition in respect of the roof covering.
17. In the interests of certainty, I shall also impose a condition requiring the works to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.

Conclusions

18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole, and that the appeal should succeed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions – listed building consent

- 1) The works hereby authorised shall begin not later than three years from the date of this consent.
- 2) The works hereby authorised shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: drawings numbered: 1344-001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108 and 109.
- 3) All new external and internal works and applied finishes shall match the existing adjacent work in terms of material, colour, texture, profile and application thereof. All such works and finishes shall be maintained as such thereafter.
- 4) No work shall commence until details, including the finish of the conservation rooflights to be used in the works hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.