

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by I Radcliffe BSc(Hons) MRTPI MCIEH DMS

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

Decision date: 13 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/16/3158854
16 Grantbridge Street, London N1 8JN

- 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 De Sibert against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/2012/FUL, dated 17 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Duncan Terrace / Colebrook Row Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the Duncan Terrace / Colebrook Row Conservation Area. In the exercising of planning functions the statutory test in relation to Conservation Areas is that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Policy DM2.3 of Islington's Development Management Policies (DMP) and policy CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy are consistent with this test.
 4. In terms of assessing the significance of the Conservation Area and the contribution that the at the appeal property and terrace makes to it, I have taken into account the Duncan Terrace / Colebrook Row Conservation Area Design Guidelines (CADG), which is supplementary planning guidance, the comments of the main parties and my observations during the site visit.
 5. The Conservation Area covers a mainly residential area predominantly consisting of late Georgian and early Victorian terraces. The architecture of the houses reflects the era in which they were built and the consistency of the terraces has created a high quality built environment. The significance of the Conservation Area is therefore architectural and historical.
 6. No 16 is a house located towards the middle of the long terrace on the eastern side of Grantbridge Street. Its symmetry and regular features that are shared with other houses in the terrace means that the terrace has group value that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the
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- Conservation Area. In views from the street the roofs of the houses within the terrace are hidden from view by the front parapet wall.
7. The proposed loft conversion would almost entirely fill in and extend upwards the V shaped butterfly roof of the house to create an en-suite bedroom. The angle of the extension's front roof slope would be sufficiently gentle for the development not to be visible in views from Grantbridge Street. Similarly, owing to the level topography of the area, the location of the house towards the middle of the terrace and the enclosure of the terrace by terraces on surrounding roads, the sides and rear of the roof extension would not be visible in other public views. As a result, the proposed development would comply with the roof design policies contained within the CADG.
 8. However, in views from the rear garden of the property and photographs supplied, it is clear to me that the rear of the terrace is characterised by the regular rhythm of butterfly roofs. This feature forms part of the terrace's unity in design and appearance that contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area. By almost entirely infilling the dwelling's roof and raising its height at the rear so that its party walls are level with, or above, the height of its chimney pots the proposal would dominate the roof of the building and interfere with the regular rhythm of development. This would be contrary to the supplementary planning document Islington Urban Design Guide (UDG) which identifies that where rear rooflines have a strong rhythm a strong presumption against such development will exist. The significant adverse effect that would be caused by the proposed roof extension would be visible from the rear of houses along Danbury Street that face the appeal property, particularly in views from the upper floors. Whilst these are private views this would not diminish the harm that would occur.
 9. The rear of the properties along Danbury Street seen from No 16 exhibit dual pitched roofs and a number of dormers and mansard roofs that appear to be roof extensions. Similarly, in adjacent streets front extensions at roof level form part of the streetscene. However, nothing has been brought to my attention that indicates the roof line to the rear of the terrace of which the appeal property forms a part has been altered in this way.
 10. Reference has been made to two dwellings where an identical style of roof extension to that proposed has been approved by the Council¹. The circumstances in each proposal are likely to be different, and in any event the fact that apparently similar development has been granted permission is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.
 11. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its significance. The harm caused by the proposed development to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole would be less than substantial. In such circumstances paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') advises that the harm that would be caused should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
 12. In accordance with the statutory duties described, I attach considerable importance and weight to the harm that would be caused to the Conservation

¹ 88 Prebend Street, London N1 8PR & 23 Linton Street, London N1 7DU

Area. On the other side of the balance, the proposal by creating an additional bedroom would create a larger dwelling, increasing the mix of house sizes and choice in the area by a modest amount. Environmentally, the energy efficient construction of the roof extension would reduce heat loss from the property and thus make a small contribution towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Economically, the scheme would generate some construction employment, although by its nature it would be short lived. It is also likely to result in the levying of higher council tax and stamp duty which would be of benefit to the public purse.

13. Taking all these matters into account, my overall conclusion is that the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the demonstrable harm that would be caused to the Duncan Terrace / Colebrook Row Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the Framework, as well as failing the statutory test. As such it would be contrary to policies DM2.1, DM2.3 of the DMP, policy CS9 of the Core Strategy and the UDG. Policy DM2.1 requires the protection of the character and appearance of a locality through high quality design that respects local design features.

Other matters

Personal circumstances

14. The proposed extension would provide additional accommodation for the appellant's growing family. Whilst I have given these personal circumstances careful consideration, I am mindful of the advice contained in Planning Practice Guidance² that in general planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. It is also probable that the proposed development would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material. For these reasons, I therefore find that this factor is not of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm that I have identified which would occur in relation to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

15. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. The house is in a highly accessible location with services and facilities within easy reach on foot or by sustainable modes of transport. The extension would provide greater internal space for occupiers and make efficient use of the site. There would also be the public benefits that I have described above. However, the proposal would cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the development plan, UDG and the Framework.
16. Having regard to all of the matters raised, I conclude that any presumption in favour of the development is clearly outweighed by the harm that I have identified the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and the resulting non-compliance with the development plan as a whole and the Framework. As a result, the proposal would not constitute a sustainable development. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Ian Radcliffe

Inspector

² ID 21b-008-20140306 – 'What is a material planning consideration?'