
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2017

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31st May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/17/3167220

Flat C, 2 Southcote Road, Islington, London N19 5BJ

- 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 Aurore Down against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/3855/FUL, dated 30 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of rear dormer and formation of roof terrace to existing flat roof, together with insertion of 2 velux windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and, linked to that, whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Tufnell Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 2 Southcote Road is a three-storey, end of terrace property currently divided into flats. The property, which appears to have been built in the Victorian era, is traditionally proportioned and designed and incorporates a three-storey flat roofed outrigger at the rear.
4. The proposal is for a dormer extension at the rear of the property and the installation of two rooflights to facilitate the conversion of the attic to form an additional bedroom. In addition it is proposed to utilise the flat roof of the outrigger as a roof terrace. The terrace would be accessed by a door in the dormer and would be enclosed by metal railings. No objection has been raised by the Council to the rooflights and from everything I have seen and read, there is no reason for me to disagree.
5. The site lies within the Tufnell Park Conservation Area which is centred around a planned estate laid out in the 1860's-1870's. The area is characterised by long terraces and semi-detached properties which have a rhythm to their design and appearance. The appeal property, which appears generally unaltered in terms of its form and appearance at roof level, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The Council's 'Urban Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in January 2017 provides advice on how urban design principles should be applied to ensure that new development successfully contributes to the character of an area. In terms of the provision of dormers, the SPD seeks to ensure that such structures are appropriately proportioned. It advises that a dormer should line up with and be no wider than the windows immediately below, and should be set a clear distance from the ridge, boundary parapets and above the eaves.
7. The proposed dormer would have a lead fascia and slate cladding to the cheeks to match the existing roof slope. However, the structure, which would have a box-like form, would be well over twice the width of the windows below and its frontage would be almost entirely glazed. Consequently the extension would be bulky and disproportionate to the windows below. In addition, whilst it would be set down from the ridge line and in from the dividing wall to the neighbouring property, part of the structure would bisect the eaves line to facilitate provision of a door onto the proposed roof terrace. I recognise that it would be difficult to see that element of the proposal other than from neighbouring properties but nevertheless the extension would fail to respect the form of the original roof.
8. In terms of the wider Conservation Area, I acknowledge that there are dormer windows on a number of other properties in the terrace. These structures appear to vary in terms of their size and appearance, although I note that that which the appellant refers to as No 3, is substantial. It seems to me that this is not necessarily a good example of development to follow but nevertheless I acknowledge that dormers are now part of the character and appearance of this particular terrace.
9. However, unlike the other dormers in the row, the proposal incorporates a set of high level railings to the proposed terrace. Whilst I noted a small number of roof terraces and railings on dwellings in close proximity these were generally situated on outriggers of a lower height. I have been referred to examples of high level railings being approved elsewhere but as I do not have the details of these cases I cannot be sure that the circumstances that led to their approval are directly comparable to the scheme before me. In my judgement the cumulative impact of the large dormer and the high level railings would be overbearing and incongruous. As such the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the property and the wider area.
10. I acknowledge that as the structure is at the rear of the property it would not impose on the street scene. Nevertheless the SPD advises that both public and private views would be taken into account in the assessment of the visual impact on the character of the area. In this case, the development would be visible to a number of surrounding properties.
11. For the reasons set out the proposal would not reflect the character or appearance of the host property and would cause some, albeit limited, harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) Policies CS8 and CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of Islington's Development Management Policies (2013) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development makes a positive

contribution to local character and conserves and enhances the significance of conservation areas.

12. In terms of the approach in the National Planning Policy Framework, where a proposal would result in less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, as in this case, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. I accept that the proposal would provide an additional bedroom and outdoor space for the occupants of the top floor flat, and these are benefits of the scheme. I am not persuaded however, that those considerations equate to public benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
13. Therefore, for these reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR