The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6th June 2017

by Caroline Mulloy BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/17/3172419
Second floor flat 3, 62 Westbourne Road, Islington, London N7 8AB

- 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 Patrick Brannelly against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
- The application Ref P2016/4947/FUL, dated 15 December 2016 was refused by notice dated 8 February 2017.
- The development proposed is described as 'retention of the existing roof terrace with external staircase (retrospective)'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The roof terrace and external staircase had been erected at the time of my site visit and the application is, therefore, retrospective and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a second and third floor flat within a mid-terrace residential property situated on the north-east side of Westbourne Road. The property is part of a traditional classically proportioned terrace which retains many of its original architectural features including bay windows to ground floor and basement, sliding sash windows, decorative arched door heads and a continuous parapet. Some houses including the appeal property have mansard roof extensions.

5. The regular rhythm of the terrace is emphasised by the houses being set on a consistent building line with small light wells enclosed by railings, bay windows, the fenestration pattern, the pattern of raised fire walls and the continuous parapet. These factors contribute to the visual uniformity and cohesiveness of the terrace. Despite some alterations, the historic form and features of the rear elevations are still clearly legible. The less formal arrangement to the rear forms an important contrast to the more ordered, uniform composition of the principle elevation. Consequently, both the front and rear elevations of the

terrace make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The roof terrace is situated on top of the existing mansard roof surrounded by an approximately 1.1m timber balustrade, decking and external spiral staircase. The balustrade is recessed from the front elevation by around 2.9m. Due to this set back only the top of the timber balustrade is visible in public views on Westbourne Road. However, the roof terrace is at odds with the existing roof form and creates a bulky addition to the property, extending significantly above the roof line of the mansard roof. The design and materials are in stark contrast with the traditional features and materials of the host property. Furthermore, the large metal spiral staircase and associated domestic paraphernalia adds to the visual clutter. Consequently, the roof terrace is an incongruous addition which undermines the architectural integrity of the property and wider terrace.

7. Although the roof terrace is not prominent in views from Westbourne Road, due to its height and positioning on the roof, it is highly visible in open views available from Lough Road to the rear. The proposal would, therefore, harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

8. My attention has been drawn to other examples of roof terraces in the locality. However, I understand that none of these benefits from planning permission which limits the weight which I can attach to them in my Decision. Whilst I have had regard to these examples they, nonetheless, serve to confirm the disruptive nature of roof terraces to the continuity of the terrace. In any case, I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.

9. Whilst there may be some benefits to the occupant of the property in terms of improving their accommodation and providing access to an outdoor amenity space this does not outweigh the harm I have found with respect to the character and appearance of the area.

10. For the reasons stated above, I conclude that the development harms the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policy 7.4 of the London Plan 2016, Policies CS8 and CS9 of the Council's Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM2.1 of the Council's Development Management Policies 2013 which collectively seek to secure high quality design and protect and enhance the built and historic environment and local character. Conflict also arises with the Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 which recognises that roof terraces and balconies can appear visually incongruous and that consideration should be given to the scale and visual prominence and the impact on the established townscape and architectural style.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons stated and taking into account all other considerations, the appeal should be dismissed.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector