
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2017

by R A Exton Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/W/17/3169690

14 Holywell Row, Hackney, London EC2a 4JB

- 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 Neptune Group against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref 2016/3957, dated 19 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is provision of a new roof terrace and new box roof light above staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the Shoreditch Conservation Area, paying special attention to the desirability of preserving its character or appearance.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is situated on the south eastern side of Holywell Row and forms part of a group of locally listed buildings within the Shoreditch Conservation Area (SCA). The local listing describes Holywell Row as a lane running north east that follows the line of an old established track between Worship Street and Curtain Road. Its narrowness and crooked alignment indicate its early origins and it had been built up on both sides with housing by the late 18th century. The terrace that now stands on the south eastern side, of which the appeal site forms part, mimics this Georgian heritage but was mostly rebuilt in the 19th century.
 4. No 14 Holywell Row is described in the local listing as of early or mid-19th century appearance with a stock brick front, sash windows and a ground floor shop front. There are dormer windows in the roof. The first floor windows are recessed with round-headed arches, a typically early 19th century treatment. Neighbouring buildings either side within the Georgian style terrace are similar, with subtle differences in appearance. I consider that the significance and architectural and historic interest of the conservation area as a whole relates to the layout of the streets and variety and design of buildings within it. The locally listed building's interest relates to its age, design and materials and the
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degree of uniformity and generally unaltered nature of the terrace which it forms a part of.

5. The proposal would involve the addition of a fixed box roof light to facilitate access to the terrace together with glazed parapets some 1100mm high to from barriers towards the front and rear of the terrace. Hollywell Row is narrow and consequently there would be limited views of the glazed parapet closest to the front elevation looking up from the street directly in front of the site. There would be more likelihood of views of it from further north along Hollywell Row, looking back and up towards the site. The use of the roof as a terrace would most likely bring with it the types of domestic paraphernalia that could be seen through the glazed parapet, and therefore be more visible. Chairs, tables, parasols and ornamental planting are all features that could be reasonably expected on a roof terrace and over which there is no planning control. If smoked or opaque glazing were used this could reflect the surroundings and be prominent as a result.
6. In the context of the relatively uniform and unaltered roof form of No 14 and the adjacent buildings of a similar age and appearance which it is most closely related I consider that this would result in an uncharacteristic appearance. This would detract from the significance and special interest of this locally listed building, the group of which it forms part and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the SCA as a whole. Consequently the proposal would be contrary to policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, policies 24 and 25 of the Hackney Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2010 and Policies DM1 and DM28 of the Hackney Development Management Local Plan 2015. These seek to ensure that new development respects local character through positive design with particular regard to the preservation of heritage assets and in doing so are consistent with the aims of National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)
7. Whilst there appears to be no public vantage points of the proposal from the rear, the development would be more visible from the nearby buildings and their curtilages. As this area is within the SCA I also consider the desirability of preserving its character and appearance as affected at the rear. Due to the existing lower level terrace on the appeal property and a greater degree of variation in the appearance of rear elevations of adjacent buildings I do not consider that the proposal would result in such an uncharacteristic appearance when viewed from this aspect. For the same reason I do not consider that it would detract from the significance and special interest of this locally listed building.
8. My attention has been drawn to other roof terraces in the area, some of which were visible from my site visit. The host buildings for these are of very different architectural style or age to the appeal site and therefore do not bear direct comparison with or form precedent in support of the proposal. Most notably there are no comparable roof terraces on the adjacent buildings of similar age and appearance which the appeal site is most closely related to.

Balance

9. I consider that the overall effect of the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the SCA as a whole and consequently in terms of the Framework would result in 'less than substantial' harm. Having identified harm I must give this considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 134 of Framework requires that where development will lead to less than substantial harm, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal with a presumption that preservation of character and appearance is desirable. In this case no public benefits have been identified.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above and taking all other matters raised into account I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Exton

INSPECTOR