

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by R Barrett BSc (Hons) MSc Dip UD Dip Hist Cons MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 6th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/17/3169794

32 St Paul's Road, Islington N1 2QW (Appeal A)

- 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 Francesco Muntoni against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/3477/FUL, dated 6 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is 'removal of existing closet wing pitched roof and creation of new opening in rear wall of closet wing; the erection of a single storey garden room to the rear of the existing closet wing and a flat roof unifying the closet wing and extension. Conversion of interior of existing closet wing interior from shower room to WC and corridor.
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Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/Y/17/3169791

32 St Paul's Road, Islington N1 2QW (Appeal B)

- 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 Francesco Muntoni against the decision of Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/3716/LBC, dated 6 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'removal of existing closet wing pitched roof and creation of new opening in rear wall of closet wing; the erection of a single storey garden room to the rear of the existing closet wing and a flat roof unifying the closet wing and extension. Conversion of interior of existing closet wing interior from shower room to WC and corridor'.
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Appeal A and Appeal B relate to the same site. Whilst I have considered each proposal on its own merits, given that they have much in common, and in the interests of brevity, I have dealt with them in one document.
3. I note that the Council's decision notices does not refer to the current London Plan. However, I am making my decision in accordance with the current version; extracts of which have been provided by the Council in its questionnaire and referred to in its Statement of Case. As the appellant has had an opportunity to comment in that regard, no prejudice would result.

Main Issues

4. The effect of the proposed extension on the special architectural or historic interest of the appeal property, a grade II listed building and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Canonbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site includes part of a grade II listed building, comprising properties in a terrace of similar buildings. The appeal property includes three storeys above a basement, with a stucco and brick finish set under a shallow pitched roof, which is mainly hidden by a parapet. With some detailing and embellishment of its front elevation, the rear is simpler in its detail, which generally gives it a utilitarian appearance. It has a simple closet wing with a pitched roof, possibly a later addition, which despite some unsympathetic alteration over time, still contributes to the upright proportions and history of the listed property. The appeal property's historic fabric, its embellishment and simple rear elevation with traditional closet wing all contribute to the significance of the listed building.
6. The close relationship of the appeal property to its listed neighbours and their general similarity in scale, form, materials and detailing, contributes to the significance of the listed building. This is the case, despite alterations and some additions over time, particularly at the rear, and the fact that the terrace may not have all been built at the same time. In particular, the generally upright proportions of the closet wings and other rear additions, despite some variations in their size, height, design and detailing, adds to the rhythm and unity of the listed terrace, which in turn contributes to the significance of the listed building.
7. The Canonbury Conservation Area is generally residential in character, including high quality, largely eighteenth and nineteenth century residential terraces, which normally line the streets, in a regular and planned layout. Similarity in their scale, form, materials and detailing give the Conservation Area a cohesive feel. The appeal site, and the terrace of properties in which it sits, significantly contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
8. The proposed rear addition would extend some way out from the main rear elevation of the listed building. It would appear large in relation to it, such that it would appear out of proportion. Further, its excessive depth would result in a more horizontal addition, which would fail to replicate the upright proportions of a traditional closet wing and appear out of place. In turn that would disrupt the unity and rhythm of the rear of the terrace, despite the fact that it would be smaller than some other rear additions nearby. Whilst I appreciate that the rear of the appeal property and listed terrace is open to limited public views, views from nearby rear gardens and upper floors would be appreciable.
9. I have found that the appeal proposals would result in unacceptable harm to the listed building. I have also found that the listed building significantly contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Therefore, it follows that the appeal proposals would fail to preserve the character and appearance of that Conservation Area.

10. In coming to these conclusions, I have had regard to the benefit of further exposing the existing rear elevation of the appeal property and the stair window and retaining the toilet within the proposed extension that would replace the closet wing. I have also taken account of the enhanced space for current and future occupiers that would be provided by the proposed addition. I have also had regard to the difficulty that the appellant has had in designing a layout that would suit its needs and the proposed use of sympathetic architectural language, materials and a sedum roof that would replace some unsympathetic detailing on the existing closet wing. However, those benefits and matters do not outweigh the unacceptable harm that I have identified.
11. I conclude that the appeal proposal would fail preserve the character and appearance of the Canonbury Conservation Area and the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. It would therefore be contrary to Policy 7.8 of the London Plan: *The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011* (2016), Policy CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM2.3 of Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2013). Those policies together, aim to conserve and enhance the historic significance of Islington's unique heritage assets. No policies in the Islington Urban Design Guide (2017) are before me that would be directly relevant to this appeal.

Public Benefits

12. In accordance with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I accord great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. I consider that the harm to the significance of the Canonbury Conservation Area and the listed terrace would be less than substantial; a matter to which I attach considerable importance and weight, mindful of my statutory duties¹. However, in this case, no public benefits, as identified in paragraph 134 of the Framework, are before me sufficient to outweigh that harm.

Other Matters

13. I note the appellant's concern regarding the lack of design expertise used by the Council in making its decision. However, that is a matter between the Council and appellant in the first instance.
14. Other rear extensions in the locality have been brought to my attention, including that at 1 St Paul's Place. However, none replicate the circumstances of this appeal, in terms of the context, size, design and materials proposed.
15. I have judged this appeal on the basis of the information before me and therefore it does not necessarily set a precedent for other appeals.

Conclusions

16. For the above reasons, and taking all other matters raised into consideration, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

R Barrett

INSPECTOR

¹ section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990