

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by Graham M Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 04 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/17/3178219

44 Arlington Avenue, Islington, London, N1 7AY

- 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 Rupert Stone against the decision of London Borough of Islington Council.
 - The application Ref P2017/0530/FUL, dated 8 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is roof extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that this is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the property, the terrace and the Arlington Square Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is towards the southern corner of the Arlington Square Conservation Area. This is an area of 1840s terraces, mainly of houses with two storeys and a basement. The appeal property is of this type. There is quite a strong sense of visual unity in the area, reflecting the regular grid layout of much of it, the generous width of several roads, the even scale of the houses, and the retention on many of them of original features and construction materials. The *Conservation Area Design Guidelines* [CADG] (2002) say that several of the street blocks were built as artisan's cottages serving a local employer. This could account for the relatively modest scale of housing compared to more imposing terraces in some other conservation areas in the Borough.
 4. One characteristic in which I did note considerable variation was at roof level. In one case, small, possibly original, front dormer windows were prevalent (St Paul Street). Along Bevan Street, near the appeal site, several full width roof extensions have been built. A few could be glimpsed from the road, including from a side road outside the conservation area. Rees Street is characterised by
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- full width mansard style roof extensions in full view on many, but not all, houses. Arlington Avenue, for example opposite the appeal site, contains terraces in which a few roof extensions are seen, but they are not the norm.
5. The CADG seeks to limit further disruption of the unified appearance of the terraces as built through "special roof design policies". The 3 components of this approach are to permit specified types of extension in named streets (including Rees Street, but not the appeal terrace); permit set-back roof extensions elsewhere only if they are not visible from any street level or public area; and otherwise not allow any roof extensions visible from the street.
 6. The *Islington Urban Design Guide* Supplementary Planning Document [IUDG] (2017) reflects more recent development plan policy. It says that rooflines are often an important feature contributing to the character of a conservation area. Proposals for roof extensions anywhere along an unaltered roofline will not generally be acceptable. However, it also says that where it is important to maintain the unbroken roofline on the street frontage, a rear roof extension, invisible from the public realm, may be acceptable.
 7. The application drawings show that the proposal would not be seen from the road directly opposite the site. The Council says it would be seen in longer views. I compared near and longer distance views of the top of an existing roof extension on the other side of Arlington Avenue. I was not able to detect any increase in visibility with increased distance. Hence I am not persuaded by the Council's allegation that, even if the extension would not be seen from nearby, it would be seen from further away. In my judgement, the proposal would not be seen on the street frontage, from where the appearance of the terrace would be unchanged.
 8. There is one property in the appeal terrace where it could be said that the front roofline has been broken. This is near the middle of the terrace, where there is a small dormer window at the front and a full width extension at the rear. However, this property is unique and does not in my view set a model for roof extensions elsewhere along the terrace: it forms a bridge over the access into Clock Tower Mews. The Mews is a backland development, from which it is possible to see towards the rear of the appeal site and the back of Bevan Street.
 9. There is a clear contrast between these two terraces. There are 2 small part-width roof extensions near the appeal site, which leave most of the original butterfly roof form intact. Bevan Street contains several full width roof extensions, in a variety of designs, where another similar extension has been approved recently, between existing extensions. I find that the present proposal would detract materially from the character of the appeal terrace, in terms of the loss of the original roof form and introducing a scale of roof enlargement not characteristic of this particular terrace. This change would be seen from the Mews behind the terrace, albeit not from the front.
 10. The Guidelines already cited make the point that it is important to consider the merits of a proposal in the context of its own particular terrace, including the existence and extent of changes to original roof patterns. In doing this, I have found that the proposal would detract in a small but significant way from the

character of the property and the appeal terrace, and their appearance when seen from the rear, from a publicly accessible place.

11. Consequently I conclude that the proposal would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the property, the terrace and the Arlington Square Conservation Area. It would not accord with development plan policies in Islington's Core Strategy (2011) and Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2013). In the former, Policies CS 8 & CS 9 require the scale of development to reflect and enhance local character and heritage assets to be conserved and enhanced. In the latter, Policies DM2.1 & DM2.3 require, among other things, that high quality design respects local context and built heritage and that the significance of heritage assets is conserved. More generally, there would be a shortfall in relation to a high quality of design, complementing local architectural character, that is required by Policy 7.6 in The London Plan (2016).
12. I consider that these findings are supported by guidance in the CADG and IUDG, referred to above, and given added weight by the inclusion of the appeal terrace in the Council's *Register of Locally Listed Buildings and Locally Significant Shopfronts* (2010), where "important group value" is a principal quality.
13. In addition, by detracting from the character of the property and the terrace and from their appearance at the rear, the proposal would fail to satisfy the statutory duty regarding the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of a conservation area, to which I attach considerable importance and weight.
14. Planning permission should therefore be withheld and I dismiss the appeal.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR