

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/D/19/3232514

63 Harmood Street, London NW1 8DT

- 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 James Wild against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2019/1677/P, dated 27 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is a double mansard loft extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application form and appeal form have used the same description, but the decision notice of the Council uses a different description. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application in the heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site contains a 2 storey dwelling and is located within a group of adjoined residential properties. The dwelling at the appeal site and the neighbouring property of 61 Harmood Street are of comparable scale to most of the other buildings within the group, but have less intricate detailing to their front elevations. There are 2 taller buildings, one of which is adjacent to the appeal site, which break up the uniformity of the group. However, these are consistent with each other in terms of height, which minimises the level of disruption and enables the remainder of the buildings to be viewed as a generally consistent group. Adjacent to the appeal site, passing under one of the taller buildings, is a pedestrian route, the users of which have views of the rear elevation of the appeal site.
5. The site is located within the Harmood Street Conservation Area which focusses primarily on the residential buildings of Harmood Street and the immediately surrounding roads. The Council's Conservation Area Statement (CAS) identifies that the area is relatively free from extensions at roof level and that this, along with the largely unaltered cottage character of the built form, contributes to the

character of the area. As part of the main groups of buildings within the Conservation Area, the existing building plays an important role in terms of the significance of the heritage asset. I have had special regard to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6. The proposed mansard roof would extend above the roof of the existing dwelling. This would disrupt the consistent roof line of the pair of dwellings that are located between the taller buildings and would be at odds with the consistent height of the majority of the group. The proposal would therefore cause the dwelling at the appeal site to become more prominent than the other dwellings of comparable scale and be at odds with the existing rhythm and arrangement of dwellings.
7. Although there are taller buildings within the group, this proposal would introduce a further disruption to the roof line, in a manner that would not replicate the other roof forms of the group. The presence of two taller buildings does not therefore alleviate the visual effect of the increase of the height of this dwelling.
8. Mansard roofs exist within the locality, with a pair being present within Powlett Place and a further example at Harmood House. However, as a pair, the Powlett Place mansards have a more coherent appearance and those dwellings are not part of a terrace of comparable length, consistency or prominence and this therefore reduces their effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the Harmood House example, which is outside the Conservation Area and integral to a building of entirely different scale and appearance, is too unlike the appeal site to be afforded weight in the assessment of this proposal.
9. It has been suggested by the appellant that the development should be viewed in a narrow context as it is one of 2 dwellings between the taller buildings identified above. However, guideline CB27 of the CAS identifies that regard should be had to the building, adjoining properties and the streetscape and it is therefore appropriate to assess the proposal in both narrow and wide contexts.
10. Due to the above, I find that the proposal would detract from the appearance of the group of buildings and cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. I consider this harm to be less than substantial.
11. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, this harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. In this regard, letters of support identify that larger family homes are needed and the appellant has stated that the proposal would secure the use of the property as a family home. However, no case has been made that the use of the dwelling would not continue if the development did not occur and I have not been provided with evidence to support the assertion that larger family homes are needed in the area. No other public benefits have been brought to my attention and therefore, as the Framework requires that great weight is afforded to the conservation of heritage assets, I find that the less than substantial harm caused is not outweighed.
12. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017) which seek that development, amongst other things, respects local character

and context, and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Other Matters

13. Plans have been provided which show a hypothetical scenario where the same development is undertaken at the neighbouring property. It appears that the necessary planning permissions are not in place for such a scenario to occur and this is not the proposal before me. I therefore give this no weight.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR