The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2020

by S Harley BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI ARICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/19/3238695
Flat 3, 13 Ashley Road, Islington, London N19 3AG

- 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 Ms Jemma Field against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
- The application Ref P2019/1309/FUL, dated 26 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 June 2019.
- The development proposed is dormer loft extension to the top floor flat owned by the applicant.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the semi-detached property and the area.

Reasons

3. No 13 Ashley Road is a semi-detached building within a street of mainly residential properties. No 13 is three storey and sub-divided into three flats. Flat 3 is the top flat. The main living accommodation is on the top floor and the bathroom is on the floor below.

4. Although the Council's decision notice refers to a terrace, Nos 9-19 (odds) are a set of three pairs of semi-detached houses originally of the same appearance. Subsequently No 9 has been altered by a hip to gable roof extension and render to the walls. No 19 has solar panels on the front roof slope. No 11 has wooden railings around the flat roofed projection to the rear.

5. The proposed dormer would be mainly to the rear but would extend across the hipped roof at the side to allow the necessary headroom for the proposed stairs. From the rear the proposed dormer would have a modern boxlike appearance which, due to its width and shape, would appear out of scale by physical over development at roof level and incongruous in conjunction with the hipped roof of the host property and the adjoining semi-detached house. The structural elements of the rear/side of the dormer would not align with structural features of the host property and the proposed windows would be of different shape, proportion and size compared to the existing windows. It would therefore have a harmful effect on the host property and the adjoining semi-detached property disrupting their rhythm and harmony even though not

prominent from public viewpoints. Accordingly the proposal would conflict with the Urban Design Guide 2017 (the UDG) which sets out that window design should be in keeping with the original dwelling and relate to the windows of the original house in proportion, detailing and position.

6. That part of the dormer facing Ashley Road would have a front slope matching the front slope of the main roof and materials that would match the existing property. It would be set back from the front roof line; down from the ridge line; and up from the eaves of the side of the building. As a result the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Ashley Road area would be minimal as viewed from the street particularly given the height of the host property and neighbouring buildings and the relatively narrow gap between them.

7. The Council is also concerned about the potential loss of a side chimney. The Design and Access Statement states that the existing front chimney would be retained and that its omission from the plans was in error. It has been shown on the revised plans P250-B Rev 02 and P200-B Rev 01.

8. Taking all the above into account I consider the proposed development, taken as a whole, would have a harmful effect the character and appearance of the host property and the attached semi-detached property, even though the effect on the wider Ashley Road area would be minimal. I find conflict with Policy CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy 2011; Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of Islington's Local Plan Development Management Policies 2013 and the UDG which together seek high quality design that enhances and protects Islington's built environment and make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

Other Matters

9. As set out above significant alterations particularly at roof level have taken place at No 9. The Council advises that the roof alterations at this property took place under permitted development rights and accordingly they were not subject to the scrutiny of a formal planning application. Whether or not this was the correct interpretation at that time is not a matter for me in this appeal. Nevertheless the alterations now form part of the built fabric of the area. Planning permission, Ref P2014/2587/FUL, has also been granted for a roof extension in the form of a hip to gable roof extension at No 11 (which would help restore the symmetry of that pair of properties). However, nothing that I have seen leads me to conclude that the proposed dormer, with its boxlike appearance protruding across the hipped roof, and with the extent, shape and proportions of the proposed windows would be appropriate at the appeal property.

10. I acknowledge the appellant's desire for larger living accommodation without the disruption of moving and leaving the local community and that there would be no intention of additional residents or extra vehicle movements. I note that discussions took place with neighbours and have seen no objections from local residents to the proposal. Indeed support has been extended from an occupier of the adjoining semi-detached property. However, these matters are not sufficient to overcome the concerns identified above and there may be other less harmful ways in which the accommodation could be extended.

11. Concern has been raised that the Officer report on the planning application states "none" under the heading "Relevant History". In my experience the history section of such reports often refers to the history on the application site itself and I have seen no reference to other site history specifically at No 13. I have taken full account of the information related to the planning applications referred to me at other properties.

12. The appellant has expressed disappointment with the way in which the Council handled the appeal proposal and other planning applications. However, this does not affect the planning merits of the case and I have considered the appeal solely on the grounds of the material planning considerations.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above I conclude the appeal should not succeed.

S Harley

INSPECTOR