



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/19/3242703

2 Northampton Grove, Islington, London N1 2PL

- 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 Josh Holliday against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2019/2614/FUL, dated 5 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of first floor rear extension, replacement of ground floor rear door and window with a set of sliding doors, introduction of rooflights and reinstatement of chimney flue.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Within their evidence, the appellant indicates that the width and depth of the proposed extension are stated incorrectly within the Council's report on the application. Nevertheless, I have considered the appeal on the basis of the development shown by the submitted plans.

Main Issues

3. The Council have raised no objection to the proposed sliding doors, rooflights and reinstatement of chimney flue elements of the development. From the evidence before me and my site visit, I see no reason to disagree with this view. The main issues in this appeal are therefore:
 - i) the effect of the proposed first floor rear extension on the living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Northampton Grove with particular regard to outlook and light; and
 - ii) the effect of the proposed first floor rear extension on the character and appearance of the locally listed host building and the Canonbury Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Living Conditions

4. The attached neighbour at 3 Northampton Grove has a two-storey rear extension set away from the boundary with the dwelling on the appeal site. A further single-storey projection runs between the rear part of this extension and the single-storey element of 2 Northampton Grove to surround a small external courtyard space to the rear of No 3.

5. The limited separation between the facing rear elevations of Nos 2 and 3 Northampton Grove and the three-storey buildings which front Newington Green Road and St Pauls Place results in a close relationship between buildings and a distinct feeling of enclosure to the rear of these dwellings. From the rear of No 3 though, and particularly at first floor level, the single-storey part of the appeal dwelling offers a more open outlook and so some relief in comparison to the surrounding two-storey development. Given its limited scale and the open aperture beneath the angled section, the chimney stack on the boundary with the appeal site does not diminish this relative openness to any significant degree.
6. The proposed first floor extension would be set back slightly in comparison to the rear boundary of No 3. Nevertheless, the combination of the height and depth of the proposed extension along the boundary with No 3 would result in near total confinement of much of the space to the rear of this neighbour by two-storey development at very close proximity. This would have an unacceptably dominant and enclosing impact on views from windows to the rear of this No 3, as well as the external courtyard space, exacerbating the already restricted outlook.
7. The appellant's evidence includes information on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts from the development and suggests that there would be no significant effects on the ground floor rooflight and two first floor windows at the rear part of No 3. However, based on my observations and taking into account the built-up nature of the area, it is plausible that light levels to the rear of No 3 could already be affected to some degree. In this context I am concerned that even a small change in light levels could have a significant effect on living conditions for the occupiers of this dwelling.
8. No detailed assessment of the existing levels of daylight or sunlight available to these windows and the rooms which they serve has been provided, and so I am unable to ascertain whether or not the suggested impacts on light levels would be meaningful. Moreover, no information is provided in relation to the ground floor level windows or external courtyard. Accordingly, I am unable to determine that the effect of the development on light levels would not be detrimental to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 3.
9. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the first floor rear extension would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Northampton Grove by reason of loss of outlook, and it has not been demonstrated that there would not be further harm as a consequence of light loss. As a result, the proposal would conflict with Policy 2.1 of the Local Plan: Development Management Policies 2013 (DMP) which includes, amongst other things, a requirement for all development to provide a good level of amenity.

Character and Appearance

10. The appeal site is located within the Canonbury CA, and so in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
11. The character, and thus significance, of the Canonbury CA derives much from the architectural quality of the predominantly residential buildings dating

mainly to the late C18 and early C19. These vary in scale and form, but are unified by the common traditional materials of brick, stucco, slate roofs and timber windows and doors.

12. The dwelling on the appeal site dates to the C19 and is identified by the Council as a locally listed building. It has a butterfly roof form which is obscured from the street scene by a parapet, and is finished in traditional materials reflecting those commonly used within the wider area. The dwelling is located at the end of a short terrace including the attached neighbour at 3 Northampton Grove and 4 Northampton Grove beyond. While No 4 has a painted exterior, the similar overall proportions of these dwellings and the regular arrangement to their windows and doors gives a harmonious rhythm and character to this part of the street scene. For these reasons, the appeal dwelling and others in the terrace make a positive contribution to the Canonbury CA.
13. The Council's Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (UDG) guides that rear extensions should be no higher than one full storey below eaves, but this is to ensure that they are subordinate to the original building. Given that it would be built over the existing single-storey projection on the appeal site, the extension would not impact on the external space for the dwelling. It would be of modest overall scale in terms of its width and depth in comparison to the appeal dwelling, and it would also be of lesser height. The extension would therefore be subordinate to the host dwelling.
14. The roof of the extension would be set down appreciably from the eaves of the main roof, and the spacing would be sufficient to ensure that it would not conflict with or interrupt the butterfly roof line visible to the rear of the appeal dwelling. The proposed window would reflect the proportions and appearance of those to the existing dwelling, and the use of matching materials would further ensure that the extension would integrate sensitively with the host building. Taking these factors together, I am satisfied that the extension would not be unsympathetic or overbearing to the appeal dwelling, and would not harm its architectural integrity.
15. Moreover, given its location to the rear of the dwelling and the arrangement of adjacent buildings, the proposed extension would not be readily visible from the street scene of Northampton Grove or in public views within the wider CA. Although there would be views from within neighbouring sites, the development would be similar to the two-storey extension to the rear of No 3. While this neighbouring extension may have been approved under a different policy context, it nevertheless means that the proposed extension would not disrupt the rhythm across the rear elevations of dwellings within this terrace and it would not be an incongruous feature. Consequently, the visual impact of the proposed extension would be limited, and I find that it would preserve the character and appearance of the terrace of dwellings in which it sits and the wider CA.
16. For all of these reasons, I conclude that the proposed first floor rear extension would preserve the character and appearance of the locally listed host building and the Canonbury Conservation Area. Accordingly, I find no conflict in this regard with Policies CS 8 or CS 9 of the Core Strategy 2011 (CS) or Policies DM2.1 or 2.3 of the DMP which require high quality design and the protection and enhancement of the borough's built and historic environment. The proposal would also accord with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to

conserve and enhance the historic environment, and with the Conservation Area Design Guidelines 2002 and the UDG which provide guidance seeking development that enhances and protects the built environment. The Council's reason for refusal additionally refers to CS Policy CS 12, but this relates to the provision of more high quality, inclusive and affordable homes and seems to me to be of more limited relevance here.

Other Matters

17. That the development would meet Building Regulation requirements, and the absence of identified harm to neighbouring occupiers through noise, disturbance or overlooking are neutral considerations and weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
18. The proposed development would increase the size of the dwelling and the kitchen, dining and living space available, and I do not doubt that this would offer improved living standards or that this would be a benefit for occupiers of the dwelling and the continued residential use of the site. However, while I acknowledge the existing dwelling is in need of some renovation, there is no substantive evidence to show that the dwelling would be unsuited to continued residential occupation in future in the absence of the proposed extension, or that the locally listed building could not otherwise be retained. These are not therefore benefits which would outweigh the harm that I have identified to the living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Northampton Grove.

Conclusion

19. While I have found no harm to the character and appearance of the locally listed host building or the Canonbury CA, the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Northampton Grove. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the development plan as a whole and for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR