
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2021

by S Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/21/3275859

48 Huntingdon Street, Islington, London N1 1BP

- 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 Mrs Karen Gorman against the decision of Islington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P2020/3579/FUL, dated 16 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension at first floor level, and removal of rear exterior wooden steps.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension at first floor level and removal of rear exterior wooden steps at 48 Huntingdon Street, Islington, London N1 1BP in accordance with the terms of application Ref P2020/3579/FUL, dated 16 December 2020 and subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Existing Site/Roof Plan 02; Proposed Lower Ground and Ground Floor Plan 05E; Proposed Site/Roof Plan 06E; Proposed New Section AA and Part Section XX 07D; Proposed Front and Rear Elevations 08C; Proposed 1st and 2nd Floor Plan 09B; Existing Floor Plan and Elevations 10; Existing Floor Plan and Sections 10B, Location Plan.
 3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and, linked to that, whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barnsbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 48 Huntingdon Street is an altered mid-terrace property situated within a row of dwellings of a similar age, built in a similar style. The terrace, which has a

rhythm to its form, fenestration pattern and detailing at the front, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the street scene and to the Barnsbury Conservation Area, the significance of which is derived largely from the layout and detailed design of the formal late-Georgian/early Victorian architecture. No 48 is identified by the Council as a locally listed building. The building has been previously altered at the rear at ground and roof level but nevertheless retains a great deal of significance as a result of its age and architectural detailing. Accordingly, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4. In order to protect the character and appearance of the area, the Council's Conservation Area Design Guidelines indicate that full width rear extensions higher than one storey or half width rear extensions higher than two storeys will not be permitted unless it can be shown that no harm will be caused to the character of the area. The Urban Design Guide 2017 also specifies that rear extensions should be subordinate to the original buildings; extensions should be no higher than one full storey below eaves.
5. The proposal is for a rear extension on top of an existing projecting element. The extension, which would replace a roof terrace, would be constructed in matching stock brickwork with a timber sliding sash window and parapet wall to match the details of the building. The extension, which would enable a reordering of the internal layout to provide enhanced bedroom and bathroom accommodation, would not be visible from Huntingdon Street but would be seen through the gap between buildings on Crescent Street.
6. The extension would, in effect, result in a projecting element some three and a half storeys in height including the basement level, or put another way, two and a half storeys above ground/garden level. Accordingly, it seems to me that it would not comply with the above design guidelines.
7. However, the extension would be considerably lower than the top of the parapet, a full storey below the eaves, leaving the 2nd floor window apparent. The form of the extension would be simple and would reflect the vertical emphasis of the building. The extension would not project further than the existing structure and whilst it would be wider than half the width of the building, it would nevertheless reflect the width of the existing extension and would appear proportionate.
8. Moreover, the extension would allow the form of the original building to remain legible and as a result of its scale against that of the host property it would appear as a subservient addition even taking into account the existing extension, a large part of which is below garden level. The use of matching materials and fenestration would help ensure that the detailing of the building, which is so important to its character, is maintained. The removal of the uncharacteristic wooden steps is a limited benefit in that regard. As such the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset would not be harmed.
9. I acknowledge that the extension would be seen from Crescent Street. However, it would adjoin, and be slightly lower in height than an extension at No 47 which can itself be seen from Crescent Street. That extension is constructed in non-matching materials and therefore appears somewhat uncharacteristic. Whilst I acknowledge that extensions of over single storey in height above garden level are not common, against the backdrop of the

extension at No 47 the proposal would not unduly alter or thereby cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the public realm and, given it would obscure uncharacteristic materials, may be of some limited benefit in that regard.

10. The extension would also be highly visible from the rear of properties facing the site and from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties and I agree with the Council that harmful incremental changes can have a negative impact on a conservation area even at the rear. However, for the above reasons, the proposal in this case would be proportionate in terms of its massing, scale and form and would allow the original building to remain legible. As such I am unconvinced it would cause harm in its own right or compound the harm of the adjoining extension. Accordingly, the proposal would preserve the significance of the conservation area.
11. On that basis I conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the area and as such would accord with the provisions of s72 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which sets out the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
12. In addition, for the reasons set out above, it would comply with the requirements of Policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021; CS8 and CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy 2011; and DM2.1 and DM2.3 of the Islington Development Management Policies 2013 which amongst other things and in various ways seek to protect and enhance Islington's historic environment, promote high quality design that makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness including its historic context, preserve or enhance the significance of conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets.
13. In addition, given I have found that the proposal would not harm the significance of either the conservation area or the locally listed building, it would also accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which sets out that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. In that case, it is not necessary to undertake the balancing exercise set out at paragraphs 202 and 203.

Conditions and Conclusion

14. In the interests of proper planning and to provide certainty I have imposed the standard time limit condition and have specified the approved plans. In order to protect the character and appearance of the area and the significance of the conservation area and locally listed building, I have specified that matching materials are used in the development.
15. For the reasons set out above and subject to these conditions, and taking all other matters raised into account, the appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted.

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR