



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2021

by C Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/21/3278059

The Heights, Mount View Road, Hornsey, London N4 4JU

- 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 Laurie Pearson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application Ref HGY/2021/0601, dated 15 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "roof extension to an existing building- 1 bedroom flat".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stroud Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns a block of flats which is situated in the Stroud Green Conservation Area, the significance of which is mainly derived from the architectural quality of the historic buildings and terraces it contains.
4. While there are other blocks of flats in the wider area, the appeal building is in a part of Mount View Road which mainly contains historic terraced housing. In contrast to the surrounding housing, the building has a relatively contemporary post-war design, with a simple, boxy frontage and a flat roof. As the building is also taller and wider than the neighbouring dwellings, it represents something of an anomaly in this particular part of the street.
5. Although the proposed extension would not be representative of neighbouring housing, the flats already maintain a different appearance to other buildings in this part of the street. The proposed front windows would align with the existing windows below and the roof slates would appear compatible with the brick exterior of the flats. Viewed in isolation, the extension would therefore be consistent with the relatively contemporary design of the building. Indeed, I am aware of an Appeal Decision¹ at Highmount where a broadly similar roof extension was allowed elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

¹ Appeal Decision: APP/Y5420/A/13/2193098

6. However, the proposal also needs to be assessed within the context of surrounding development. When approaching the site in either direction along Mount View Road, the building is currently viewed from the side amongst the neighbouring terraced housing. This disrupts its boxy profile and relative bulk so that it is not an especially prominent feature within the street. The effect of the roof extension would be to raise the height of the building well above the level of the neighbouring terraces on either side so that it would become a far more prominent feature within the street scene.
7. Although the proposed dormer windows in the front elevation would not protrude far from the roof slope, the roof itself would be a comparatively bulky structure due to its height and the relatively steep pitch. While the roof would slope away from the street frontage, it would be very noticeable in side views from some distance away, as it would be unobstructed by other development. Closer to the site, the difference in height between the extended building and the surrounding terraces would become especially evident. The height of the terraces along this part of the street is relatively consistent and there is only a small gap between the flats and the neighbouring dwellings. As such, the frontage of the building would appear to loom high above the side elevations of these terraces, dominating this particular part of the street.
8. While I accept that the existing building bears little relationship to the architecture of the surrounding housing in terms of its scale and design, it is a relatively inconspicuous feature within the street scene as it is not a great deal taller than the surrounding housing and, from many perspectives, is partially screened by other development. The proposed extension would markedly change the character of the building, making it a far more dominant feature which would more sharply contrast with the surrounding housing. As such, it would appear out of keeping within its local setting, thereby distracting from the significant features of the Conservation Area. In reaching this decision, I am particularly mindful that the Framework² says that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
9. I have considered the allowed appeal at Highmount and acknowledge the similarities between the two schemes. However, I do not consider that this case establishes a particularly convincing precedent for the development being proposed in the current appeal. The evidence before me indicates that the circumstances of Highmount are somewhat different, particularly the character of development surrounding that site, which is materially different to the part of Mount View Road in which The Heights is situated.
10. I am also aware of a previous Appeal Decision³ where an alternative proposal for a roof extension on the appeal building was dismissed. That proposal advocated a very different design from the scheme presented in the current appeal. Among other things, the previous design proposed metal roof cladding hidden behind a timber clad parapet wall. The current proposal features a more conventional slate roof and is a far simpler design to that which was previously being proposed. Whilst I recognise the effort that has been made to modify the design in order to address the concerns raised by the previous Inspector, I have determined that (for different reasons) the current proposal would also cause visual harm to the Conservation Area.

² National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021

³ Appeal Decision: APP/Y5420/W/19/3223962

11. Although I have found that the proposed extension would harm the appearance of the Conservation Area, this harm would be less than substantial as defined by the Framework. In these circumstances, paragraph 201 of the Framework advises that the harm should be weighed against any public benefits associated with the development. With this in mind, I appreciate that the extension would make a contribution to local housing supply. However, as the scale of this contribution would be very small, the public benefit would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
12. I conclude on this issue that the proposed extension would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would conflict with Policies SP11 and SP12 of the Haringey Local Plan⁴ and Policies DM1, DM9 and DM12 of the Haringey Development Management DPD⁵. These policies seek appropriate standards of design and aim to protect designated heritage assets. The proposal would also conflict with Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan⁶ which have similar objectives.

Other Matters

13. I am informed that the Council does not have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and so the development plan policies referenced above are out of date according to Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework. In such circumstances planning permission should be approved unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. According to footnote 7 of the Framework, this includes heritage assets.
14. In this case, I have determined that the proposed extension would harm the Stroud Green Conservation Area. The policies of the Framework in that regard provide clear reasons for refusing the scheme. Consequently, the absence of a five-year housing land supply does not lead me to conclude that permission should be granted in this case. This is not the sustainable development for which the Framework says that there is a presumption in favour.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

C Cresswell

INSPECTOR

⁴ Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013 – 2026

⁵ Haringey Development Management DPD, July 2017

⁶ The London Plan, March 2021