



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 November 2021

by Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/21/3266794

Flat C, 31 Cheverton Road, Islington N19 3BB

- 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 Nick Mather against the decision of London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2020/1454/FUL, dated 2 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as loft conversion with 1no. rear dormer and 2x conservation skylights to front roof elevation, to facilitate kitchen/dining room and small rear roof terrace over existing outrigger building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Since the determination of the application that is now the subject of this appeal, the London Plan 2021 was published in March 2021. The main parties have had opportunities to comment upon any relevance of this to the outcome of the appeal, including with respect to the adopted policies listed as relevant in the Council's Statement of Case.

Main Issue

3. Whether or not the proposed rear dormer and rear roof terrace would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whitehall Park Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. The significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset is drawn in-part from its regularly laid out residential streets and buildings, its sloping topography and its variety of differing architectural qualities and traditional styles. This significance is further defined by the prevalence of often consistent/original roof forms, most particularly where visible from the public realm.
5. The appeal property is a flat that comprises the upper part of a flatted three-storey end of terrace building. The proposed rear dormer, which would be visible to a range of nearby residential occupiers, would represent a sizeable addition to the roof. Moreover, it would cover close to the entirety of the rear roof slope and would, however externally treated, be of unsympathetic box-like design. Its adverse impact would be exacerbated by the intended installation of bi-folding doors that would fail to suitably respect the proportions or positions of existing window openings located beneath.

6. The site's position to a stretch of Cheverton Road that is of bending alignment is a relevant factor in this case. As a result, the southwestern flank elevation of the dormer would be readily visible from a range of Cheverton Road vantage points to the southwest, which would promote that the dormer be read and experienced as an unduly bulky addition to a pitched roof of traditional form and well-proportioned composition currently.
7. I acknowledge visibility from the site of various rear roof dormers of often large size and containing of, in some instances, modern rear-facing doors. Even so, the row that contains the appeal property and that stretches from Cressida Road to Hazellville Road is defined by a sparsity of dormer additions. Furthermore, existing roof dormers near to the site tend to be positioned such that views of them (including of their flank elevations) are not easily obtainable from publicly accessible vantage points, which assists in differentiating them from the rear dormer now before me.
8. The proposed rear roof terrace, in contrast to the proposed dormer, would appear as a discreet addition. It would cover a small area and be set at a lower base level when compared with the property's eaves height. The projection to the rear (immediately above an existing outrigger) would be across a limited distance such that, even when acknowledging the intention to install glazed balustrading, the roof terrace (if considered in isolation to the dormer) would not appear as unduly prominent or discordant. The precise specification and materials of the balustrading could be secured via condition should the appeal be successful.
9. However, for the above reasons, the proposed rear dormer would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and would lead to less than substantial harm being caused to its significance as a designated heritage asset. As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (the Framework), any less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. The scheme would bring about an enlargement/improvement to the local housing stock. However, no new unit of housing is under consideration. Thus, even when recognising the personal desires and requirements of the appellant, benefits in a housing improvement sense attract limited weight. Reference is made in the appellant's evidence to a willingness to sacrifice garden space. However, an appropriate mechanism to secure this has not been demonstrated and, in any event, no substantive public benefit would realistically be anticipated. The harm that I have identified to the significance of the CA, although less than substantial, would not be outweighed by the modest public benefits that would be brought about by the scheme.
11. The proposal conflicts with the relevant heritage provisions of the Framework, Policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, Policy CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy (February 2011), Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies (June 2013), the Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (January 2017) and the Whitehall Park Conservation Area Design Guidelines (January 2002) in so far as these policies and guidance require alterations to existing buildings in conservation areas to conserve or enhance their significance, and set out that the ad-hoc construction of dormers, roof lights and roof extensions can be very damaging to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Other Matters

12. I have noted objections/concerns raised by interested parties with respect to matters including the effect upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the ability of the building to sustain the proposed works. However, as I have found the proposal to be unacceptable for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to explore these matters further here.

Planning Balance

13. I have found that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the CA. The scheme's benefits would be outweighed by this identified harm and the associated policy conflicts. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR