



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2021

by G Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/W/21/3276497

Studio 34, 46 Morris Road, London E14 6NQ

- 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 Zoe Economides against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/21/00006, dated 22 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is Proposed new rear roof extension with new roof light, installation of 1 no. new roof light in existing roof and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Proposed new rear roof extension with new roof light, installation of 1 no. new roof light in existing roof and internal alterations at Studio 34, 46 Morris Road, London E14 6NQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PA/21/00006/NC, dated 22 December 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan PHP MOR 00 100 Revision P0; Existing Third Floor Plan PHP MOR 01 101 Revision P0; Existing Roof Plan PHP MOR 01 102 Revision P0; Existing Section AA PHP MOR 01 200 Revision P0; Existing Section BB PHP MOR 02 201 Revision P0; Proposed Third Floor Plan PHP MOR 02 101 Revision P0; Proposed Roof Plan PHP MOR 02 102 Revision P0, Proposed Section AA PHP MOR 01 200 Revision P0; Proposed Section BB PHP MOR 02 201 Revision P0 and Proposed Section CC PHP MOR 02 202 Rev P0.
 - 3) The roof lights hereby approved on the roof shall be conservation style, flush fitting to the roof slope.

Procedural Matters

2. In the interests of brevity and precision I have omitted reference to the appeal site address from the development description in my decision. I am satisfied that in so doing, neither party would be disadvantaged.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Langdon Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The former Spratt's factory and warehouses lie within the Langdon Park Conservation Area (the CA) and adjacent to the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area. The Council's officer report cites the CA's Character Appraisal which identifies the former factory buildings as being a major landmark and a reminder of the area's industrial past. The buildings are not, however, statutorily or locally listed but nevertheless make a positive contribution to the CA's character.
5. The appeal property is a top-floor apartment set within the converted former Spratt's Biscuit Factory warehouse buildings. Providing living accommodation across a main floor and mezzanine floor, the studio apartment has a small roof terrace set into the rear-facing roof slope. The proposed roof extension would, together with the rearrangement of internal spaces within the mezzanine level, allow the provision of a second bedroom.
6. The roof extension would be all but hidden from view from surrounding ground level vantage points due to the appeal building's height relative to the land around it. The substantial protruding parapet wall of the warehouse's gable wall, the greater height of the warehouse building immediately to the west and the appeal building's higher roof ridge would also render the roof extension largely hidden from view from elevated upper floor locations of all but the tallest of buildings to the north of the Limehouse Cut canal corridor.
7. Even where visible, the proposed roof extension would be seen in the context of the substantial gable wall parapet, and other parapet walls along the roof of this particular part of the warehouse. Added to that, are other substantial and angular interventions into the building's roofscape. I accept that the existing inset roof terraces, which are a widely repeated feature of the converted building, and also the part of the building which fronts Morris Road, are generally consistent and discrete features and do not disrupt the building's overall roof-form.
8. However, what is proposed in this instance would be a modest intervention into the roofscape in a discrete and unobtrusive location barely seen from ground level and with only limited views from elevated positions on neighbouring buildings. Where visible, it would be seen against a roof-form disrupted by protruding parapet walls, angular flat-roofed, brick-built elements, glazed skylights and the paraphernalia of an extensive shared rooftop terrace and garden.
9. I accept that the buildings possess a strong and largely consistent roofline. Where the roof terraces are inset into the roof their recess results in only a minimal disruption to the roofline. However, the proposal would not alter the ground-level perception of a strong and consistent roofline. Nor would it compromise the understanding of the building as a converted former warehouse or its role and contribution to the CA. It would be a modest addition to the warehouse building situated on an internally facing roof slope largely hidden from views from beyond the site.
10. Where visible, it would also be seen in the context of internal roof slopes punctuated by inset roof terraces, substantial brick-built roof structures and garden paraphernalia. All form part of the building's roof scape, whilst the proposal would not exceed the height of the building's distinctive parapet gable

wall or the existing brick wall separating the rear of the property from the communal walkway to the rear.

11. The proposal would not therefore cause harm to the character or appearance of the building, or to an understanding of its role in the local area's industrial past. As such, it would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the appeal building and upon the character and appearance of the Langdon Park Conservation Area. In the parlance of the National Planning Policy Framework and section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it would preserve the character and appearance of the Langdon Park Conservation Area.
12. The appeal building also adjoins the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area but, for the same reasons as set out above, I am satisfied that it would not cause harm to the character or setting of the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area. There would be no conflict with policies S.DH1 or S.DH3 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan, with London Plan policies D4 or HC1 or with the historic environment aims set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
13. I have noted the Council's concern that the proposal could set a precedent for future extensions which could lead to an erosion of the roofscape in more visible locations. The appeal proposal is not in a widely visible position on the building, and the specific circumstances applicable in this instance would be unlikely to be repeated in more visible locations. Concerns of the proposal setting a precedent are not a material consideration to which I give significant weight.

Other Matters

14. There has been an objection to the proposal on the basis of the terms of the property lease. This is not, however, a material planning consideration to which I give any significant weight and is a matter for the appellant to pursue with the appropriate person or persons.

Conditions

15. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. I agree that time limit and plans conditions are reasonable and necessary in the interests of good planning and to provide certainty. As the proposal includes the insertion of an additional roof light to the building's outward (east) facing roof slope where rooflights already exist, a condition regarding its details is not unreasonable in the interests of character and appearance.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Robbie

INSPECTOR