
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2022

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/21/3287158

7 Celia Road, London N19 5ET

- 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 Ms Alison Greenup against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2021/1927/FUL, dated 2 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is conversion of loft space into habitable room, with rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Tufnell Park Conservation Area (the TPCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a three storey end-of-terrace dwelling on the northern side of Celia Road. The dwellings to this side of the street exhibit a strong degree of consistency in their design, with prominent bay windows and porch surrounds to the front elevations, whilst at the rear, the main roof slope extends down over the rear closet wings, forming a distinctive feature also seen to the rear elevations of dwellings behind the site on Hugo Road.
4. The site lies within the TPCA. The Council's Conservation Guidelines (2002) set out that the TPCA is largely made up of the Tufnell Park Estate which was laid out during the 1860s and 1870s as a residential estate by Lord Tufnell, consisting of spacious single and semi-detached villas and terraces of three and four storeys. The significance of the TPCA derives from the high architectural quality of the area, with its variety of styles, flamboyant use of different materials and decoration, the unusual relationship between houses of different styles and the variety of architectural details and materials used.
5. The proposal seeks to create habitable accommodation in the roof space of the dwelling, facilitated by the addition of a dormer window to the rear roof slope. The dormer would sit level with the main ridge line and the eaves of the main roof slope and would extend across the full width of the roof, leaving only the section of roof over the closet wing in place.
6. The Islington Urban Design Guide (2017) (the IUDG) sets out that '*within conservation areas, the roofline is often an important feature contributing to*

the character of an area and therefore proposals for roof extensions anywhere along an unaltered roofline within a conservation area will not generally be acceptable. This side of Celia Road is unaltered by roof extensions, with only isolated rooflights to some dwellings. Consequently, the proposal would form a stark and dominant addition that would severely disrupt the consistency of the built form, in clear conflict with the guidance of the IUDG. The dormer would erode the characteristic elongated roof form, replacing it with a visible fourth storey to the dwelling that would significantly increase its overall scale and create an incongruous imbalance of size and form with adjacent dwellings.

7. I acknowledge that the majority of dwellings to the rear of the site on Hugo Road have dormer windows which are clearly visible from the appeal dwelling and form part of its immediate context. However, this is a different pattern of development that has evolved on Hugo Road which has not occurred on Celia Road. The proposed dormer would not be viewed as part of the Hugo Road roofscape, but would form an isolated feature that would disrupt an otherwise unaltered roofline, a feature that is a constituent part of the high architectural quality and varied style that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area.
8. This aside, the dormers to dwellings on Hugo Road are significantly smaller in scale, not extending to the extremities of the roof, but forming more modest and proportionate roof additions. The proposed rear dormer would be considerably larger in size, exacerbating its dominant and jarring visual impact.
9. In reaching a view, I agree with the appellant that the roofline to the rear of Celia Road is not readily visible from the public realm. However, the significance of a heritage asset is not solely based on the extent to which elements of it are publicly visible. Much of residents' experience of the conservation area will be from within their private residence or garden. Therefore, whilst the dormer would not be widely visible within the public realm, its harmful impact would be clearly visible from a considerable number of adjoining properties.
10. I have had regard to other roof additions referred to by the appellant. However, these examples relate either to development outside of the conservation area, or on different streets and of different design to that proposed. Therefore, I do not regard these examples as directly comparable to the scheme before me, and they do not alter my findings on the main issue.
11. For the reasons set out, therefore, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance, and heritage significance, of the TPCA. This would conflict with Policies CS8 and CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy 2011; Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of the Islington Development Management Policies 2013; and Policies D1, D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, which together require development to protect and enhance Islington's built and historic environment through high quality design that successfully addresses factors including distinctive local built form, urban form, scale, patterns, building heights and massing; and that alterations to existing buildings in conservation areas conserve or enhance their significance.
12. The harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset would be less than substantial, in the language of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 202 of the Framework directs that this harm

should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

13. The proposal would deliver some economic benefits through employment for contractors in the construction of the development, though this would be temporary and limited in scale. The additional accommodation provided would be primarily a private benefit for the appellant, with any public benefit accruing from enlarging a dwelling within the housing stock being of very limited weight.
14. The evidence before me does not indicate any other tangible public benefits. Therefore, public benefits in this case would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, to which the Framework directs I must give great weight. As a result, the Framework indicates that this provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

Other Matters

15. The Council did not find harm in respect of neighbours' living conditions. Whilst I have found harm with the design of the proposal, it would be positioned such that the massing would not cause an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties. Moreover, the proposed windows would face the same direction as existing windows, and would not lead to new opportunities for overlooking that would cause a harmful loss of privacy for nearby occupants. However, this absence of harm is ultimately a neutral factor weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the proposal would result in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. No other material considerations exist that would outweigh the development plan conflict and justify granting planning permission in this case.
17. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR