



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2023

by Lewis Condé BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/W/22/3306265

First And Second Floor Flat, 127 Offord Road, Islington, London N1 1PH

- 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 Costas Spyrou against the decision of London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2021/3408/FUL, dated 18 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Erection of mansard at Nos. 125-127 Offord Road, for the enlargement of existing first and second floor flat at No.127'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal address is taken directly from the original application form, albeit the appeal site incorporates both 125 and 127 Offord Road, as is indicated by the description of development above (also from the original application form).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Barnsbury Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises of 2no. adjoining terrace properties that occupy a prominent location at the corner of Offord Road and St Clement Street. The proposal would involve the addition of a Mansard roof to both terrace properties to provide an enlarged unit of accommodation within no. 127 Offord Road.
5. The appeal site forms part of a small terrace of four buildings (nos. 125 – 131 Offord Street). The buildings are 3 storeys in height (plus basement) and appear likely to be of 19th Century origins. The terrace has a pleasing uniformity, due to the buildings' homogenous proportions, use of traditional materials and detailing. Notably, the terrace has a consistent roofline that from street level is defined by a small parapet wall. Whilst not statutorily designated, the appeal buildings (and the adjoining two terrace buildings) have been locally listed for their architectural merits.
6. The appeal site is located within the Barnsbury CA. The CA extends across a significant area and is predominantly residential in character with some commercial frontages in parts. The CA's character, appearance and significance

is largely derived from its late Georgian and early Victorian architecture, including fine sequences of squares and residential terraces.

7. The rooflines of streets, particularly terraces, are significant design components that the Council is seeking to preserve in the CA. Indeed, the Council has adopted rather prescriptive guidance in relation to roof extensions, which is set out within the Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (the SPD) and the Barnsbury Conservation Area Design Guidelines 2002 (the BCADG).
8. With regards to the SPD, it identifies that proposals along an unaltered roofline within a conservation area will not generally be acceptable. Where the roofline is broken the SPD sets out several factors to be considered in determining applications. This includes the extent of existing roof extensions and the uniformity of rooflines in the area, as well as the characteristics of the terrace/buildings. However, in this instance, the small terrace that the appeal site sits within (nos. 125 – 131) appears to have an unaltered roofline.
9. Furthermore, the BCADG outlines that traditional roof extensions may be appropriate on specific properties listed within the document, otherwise, no roof extension visible from any street level position will be permitted. The appeal buildings are not within this list of properties identified as being potentially suitable for a roof extension. The proposed development would also clearly be visible from street level. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the BCADG.
10. Despite the above, I am mindful that both the SPD and BCADG are guidance, and the proposal needs to be considered on its own merits, having regard to its local context.
11. There are a mix of property styles in the near vicinity of the appeal site, which also display a variety of roof forms including the presence of Mansard roofs on nearby properties. There are also slight fluctuations in the storey heights of buildings in the vicinity of the site, such that the overall height of the proposed development would not be particularly out of context with its wider surroundings.
12. The proposed design of development is simple and includes appropriate materials for its location. Despite this, and the variety of roof forms nearby, the proposed mansard roofs would significantly disrupt the highly balanced appearance of the terrace the buildings are located within. The erosion of the consistent roofline would detract from the character and appearance of the small, attractive terrace block which, due to its architectural qualities and prominent corner location, positively contributes to the character of the CA. Accordingly, the proposed development would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
13. Given the size, scale, and nature of the appeal development I consider it causes less than substantial harm to the CA. Nevertheless, any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and in accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal.

14. I recognise that the appeal scheme would provide for a larger family dwelling in an area that has a shortage of such accommodation. There would also be short-term economic benefits associated with construction and refurbishment of the property. Whilst a slight increase in residents living in the area could also result in local economic benefits. The effect of these benefits would, however, be limited by the scale of the appeal scheme. As such, I do not find that they would outweigh the harm I have found.
15. The appellant has also indicated that the site is in an urban area with good access to public transport and sustainable transport options for future occupants, thereby providing environmental benefits. However, this is true of the existing property (as well as much of the borough). It therefore is not a direct benefit of the proposal that I find to be worthy of any meaningful weight.
16. Reference has also been made by the appellant to Government support for upward extensions. However, this does not overcome the need for proposals to preserve the historic environment. This is emphasised by the fact that permitted development rights introduced to enable the upward extension of buildings are not applicable for development within conservation areas.
17. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies D1, D3, D4 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), Policies CS8 and CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy (adopted 2011), Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of the Islington Development Management Policies (adopted 2013) and the Framework. Collectively, these policies and documents, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development complements local character and distinctiveness, as well as conserves or enhances the significance of the historic environment. The proposal would also fail to accord with guidance contained within the SPD and BCADG.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR