

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th February 2023

Appeal Reference: APP/V5570/D/22/3310882

20 Lysander Grove, Islington, London N19 3QY

- 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 J Farmer against the decision of Islington Borough Council.
 - The application (reference P2022/2741/FUL, dated 22 July 2022) was refused by notice dated 16 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a mansard roof loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a closely built up and attractive area of the London Borough of Islington. The location is easily accessible to services and facilities at Archway and it is well located in relation to the public transport network, with an Underground station also at Archway.
4. In the vicinity of the appeal site, houses are predominantly laid out in terraces of substantial properties, usually with modest but mature front and rear gardens in an attractive townscape. The buildings date from the nineteenth century for the most part and the area has been designated as the Whitehall Park Conservation Area.
5. Number 20 Lysander Grove is a substantial house at the end of a short terrace of similar properties on the south-eastern frontage of the road. It is located at the north-eastern end of its terrace and is a three-storey house with a large blank gable wall, topped with a wide chimney, that faces the rear of properties in Prospero Road. The house dates from the nineteenth century and is constructed in a traditional form, of brickwork embellished with classical

- features. It has been attractively modernised and adapted for modern living, however, with some extensions.
6. It is now proposed to alter and extend the house at roof level, creating a new "mansard roof" that would accommodate a bedroom and shower room in the "loft" area.
 7. Provisions in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 impose obligations on those considering whether to grant planning permission for development that would affect a conservation area. In such cases, decision makers are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas affected by development proposals. Those formal requirements are reinforced by the 'National Planning Policy Framework', especially at Section 16, which emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, though it also points out the desirability of putting a heritage asset to its "optimum viable use" as does the 'Planning Practice Guidance'.
 8. In addition, the 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history (while protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation).
 9. Local policies in the Development Plan have the same aims. Policies D1, D4 and HC1 of 'The London Plan' (dated 2021) are similarly concerned with design issues generally and with enhancing and protecting heritage assets (including conservation areas), specifically. Policies CS8 and CS9 of 'Islington's Core Strategy' (dated February 2011) are also intended to protect and enhance Islington's built and historic environment, and they specifically identify the importance of Islington's conservation areas. Policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of 'Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies' (dated June 2013) bring more detail to the broader policies of the 'Core Strategy'.
 10. Islington's 'Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document' (dated January 2017) and the 'Whitehall Park Conservation Area Design Guidelines' (dated 2002) are also relevant but they do not carry the same weight as the adopted policies in the Development Plan.
 11. The proposed extensions at number 20 Lysander Grove would involve the construction of new accommodation at roof level with rooflights on the front roof slope and an altered roof profile at the rear. The new roof profile would fundamentally change the rear roof slope and would alter the gable elevation of the building, at the end of the terrace.
 12. The alteration to the gable elevation would be obvious in views along Lysander Grove from the junction with Prospero Road, while the proposed front rooflights would also have an impact on the public realm, although their visual impact would be limited, due to the height of the building and the shallow roof pitch. At the rear of the property, the altered roof shape would be very obvious and unsatisfactory. The changed profile would be alien to the historic form of the building and it would detract from the historic character of the terrace. Even

though the rear of the building is visible from private properties rather than in public views, I am persuaded that, on balance, the scheme would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the existing house and the wider conservation area, bearing in mind the public views of the gable and the degree of change proposed to the rear roof slope.

13. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would make a useful addition to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the existing house and its surroundings in the wider conservation area outweigh the benefits of the project.
14. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR