



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2023

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/D/22/3302302

12 Sandringham Gardens, London, N8 9HU

- 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 & Ms Laurie & Hayley Robinson & Kyprianou against the decision of London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application Ref: HGY/2022/0551, dated 11 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as: Loft conversion comprising a hip-to-gable roof extension, erection of two rear dormer roof extensions, and insertion of front roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion comprising a hip-to-gable roof extension, erection of two rear dormer roof extensions, and insertion of front roof lights at 12 Sandringham Gardens, London N8 9HU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: HGY/2022/0551, dated 11 February 2022, 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: Drawing No: SK 01 - Location Plan; Drawing No: SK 02 - Block Plan; Drawing No: 2026-01 - Existing Plans; Drawing No: 2026-02 - Existing Elevations; Drawing No: 2026-07 - Proposed Plans; and Drawing No: 2026-08 - Proposed Elevations Sections.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the dormer window to the ensuite bathroom has been fitted with obscured glazing. Details of the type of obscured glazing shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority before the window is installed and once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal proposal is described on the planning application form as 'Loft extension including rear facing dormers and a hip to gable in matching clay

tile', whereas the Decision Notice issued by the Council uses the description 'Loft conversion comprising a hip-to-gable roof extension, erection of two rear dormer roof extensions, and insertion of front roof lights'. Whilst there is no indication that this revised description was agreed with the appellant, it does, nevertheless, more accurately set out what the proposed development involves. I note that the appellant has adopted the Council's description on the appeal form and for the above reasons, I have, therefore, also used this for the purposes of the appeal.

3. As the proposal is in a conservation area, I have had special regard to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the Crouch End Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The Crouch End Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 94.5 hectares and was initially designated in 1974. It was subsequently extended in 1976 and twice more in the 1990's to reach its current boundaries. The conservation area includes the town centre commercial area and the residential areas surrounding this. The Crouch End Conservation Area Character Appraisal sets out that the area has origins as a medieval hamlet evolving into a rural village but became more developed and started to take on its current form in the mid nineteenth century with the arrival of the railway to nearby Hornsey and then later to Crouch End itself. The residential elements comprise a wide range of domestic styles of architecture prevalent in the latter years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when the majority of the development took place.
6. Due to its size, the conservation area is divided into a number of sub-areas. The appeal site is located within the Haringey Park sub-area focused on Haringey Park and the small side streets leading off it. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes that this area was initially laid out in 1861 and developed as a private 'gated' street of substantial detached and semi-detached villas. Some redevelopment occurred in the early part of the twentieth century when blocks of mansion flats replaced several of the earlier villas, and Sandringham Gardens was laid out. The area was damaged by bombing in the Second World War, resulting in further redevelopment.
7. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal describes Sandringham Gardens as a short cul-de-sac of typical inter-war houses of substantial size with hipped tiled roofs and elevations in predominantly painted roughcast with exposed brick quoins and other details. It notes that all of the houses have forward projecting gable ends and recessed entrance porches and that, as a group these have a neutral effect on the conservation area. It was evident from the site visit that, when originally constructed, the houses were all built to essentially the same design, albeit that number 14 is a detached dwelling and the rest are semi-detached.

8. Given the above, the significance of the conservation area, in so far as it is relevant to this appeal, is derived from the evidential value it provides of a north London suburb which developed around an existing village during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century and of the building types, architectural styles, and building techniques of the time. It also has aesthetic value derived from the mix of building styles and their relationship with each other and the streets and spaces they enclose.
9. The appeal building is a large, two storey, semi-detached house with a short front garden and a longer rear garden. It is part of a group of three pairs of semi-detached properties and one detached house that make up one side of Sandringham Gardens. The opposite side of the street comprises two pairs of two storey, semi-detached, houses and a three and four storey, plus attic, block of flats located at the junction with Haringey Park.
10. The appeal proposal seeks to convert the current hipped roof of the house to a gable end and to add two, pitched roof, dormer windows to the rear roof plane. It is also proposed to insert three rooflights into the front roof slope. The Council's principal concern is with the hip to gable conversion resulting in the loss of legibility of the original form and massing of the house, unbalancing the symmetry of the semi-detached pair, and the reduction of the perceived gap between the houses.
11. I saw when I visited the site that although the five pairs of semidetached houses in the street were originally identical in design and appearance, over time the majority have been altered and extended in various ways. These alterations include conversion of the attached garages to habitable rooms, extensions above the attached garage, the addition of side and rear dormer windows, and various ground floor rear extensions. Number 2 Sandringham Gardens has been extended with a hip to gable conversion and three other houses in the street have had the roof form altered to extend it over a first floor side extension. Several of the houses, including Number 10 adjoining the appeal building, have had dormer windows constructed on the side facing roof plane. As a result of these various extensions and alterations, none of the original pairs of semi-detached houses are entirely symmetrical and, of these, only numbers 1 and 3, on the opposite side of the street, retain both roofs unaltered.
12. In terms of the street scene, because Number 2 Sandringham Gardens has been extended to the side and now has a gable end, a similar alteration to the appeal building would add an element of symmetry to the group of three pairs of semi-detached houses. Number 14 is an anomaly within the street as it is a detached building with a different roof form and, whilst it is the end building, it stands apart from the more closely visually related pairs of semi-detached houses.
13. The cul-de-sac form of Sandringham Gardens would result in the proposed hip to gable alteration only being readily perceptible from within the street and close to the appeal building, as longer range views are only possible when approaching from Haringey Park. From this direction the roof form of the appeal building is less noticeable until the viewer is close to the house.
14. The Council have not raised any specific objection to the rear dormers or the proposed front rooflights other than noting that one of the dormers could not be accommodated without the alteration to the roof. I observed that whilst the

proposed dormers may be visible in some views from Haringey Park, from here they would be seen in context with the flat roofed rear dormers that are present on all the other houses on this side of the street, except for number 14. I also saw that from this viewpoint the conversion of the hipped roof to a gable end would not be readily discernible.

15. With regard to the perceived gaps between the properties, whilst the proposed development would extend the ridge of the roof towards the neighbouring house at Number 14, the line of the end wall of the appeal building at first floor level would be unchanged. The main two storey element of the appeal building would remain separated from the neighbouring house by the width of the existing single storey side addition. This would be visually similar to the current relationship between Numbers 4 and 6 and Numbers 8 and 10 on the same side as the appeal building, and numbers 3 and 5 opposite.
16. When I visited the site, I noted that the impression of the street is one of an almost continuous built frontage at ground floor level as a combination of the existing ground floor additions and the extensions to some of the properties has effectively resulted in the neighbouring pairs of semi-detached houses becoming linked. The gaps between the properties are not a defining characteristic of the street with the forward projecting gables above the first floor bay windows, forward projecting ground floors with recessed entrances, and the houses having external materials in common giving the street a cohesive appearance despite the alterations that have been made to most of the properties.
17. Given the above, I find that whilst the proposed development would alter the appearance of the appeal building, it would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the street. Due to the large extent of the conservation area and the diversity of buildings that it contains, the proposed development would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole and would thus preserve its significance.
18. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the Crouch End Conservation Area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Policies DM1, DM9, and DM12 of the Haringey Development Management Development Plan Document 2017; Policies SP11 and SP12 of the Haringey Local Plan 2017; and Policies D6 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021. When read together these policies expect, among other matters, that extensions to dwellings should have regard to the character of the existing building and that new development should be of a high standard of design that has regard to its context and preserves, or enhances, the significance of heritage assets.

Other Matters

19. I have had regard to the representations received from neighbouring occupiers. These primarily raise matters relating to the design and appearance of the proposed extension which have been covered above.
20. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential for overlooking of the rear garden of Number 14 Sandringham Gardens. The proposed scheme would introduce two dormer windows onto the rear of the appeal building. From the submitted drawings, the dormer closest to the boundary with number 14 would serve a bathroom and, as such, would most likely be glazed with obscured

glass. Whilst this is not specified on the approved drawings, it could be secured by an appropriately worded condition. Due to the position of the second, larger, dormer window which would serve a bedroom, there would be some opportunity for causal overlooking of the far end of neighbouring gardens to either side. However, this would not be appreciably greater than currently exists from the existing first floor rear windows.

21. In urban areas it is common for there to be some degree of overlooking of neighbouring garden areas and, in isolation, the small amount of additional causal overlooking that may occur from the proposed rear dormer is not sufficient to warrant withholding planning permission. I am also mindful that the Council do not have any objections to the proposal on this ground.
22. Several of the representations express a preference for a previously approved scheme comprising a single rear dormer combined with a further dormer on the side roof plane. That scheme has been granted planning permission and the appellant could implement it if they so wish. However, I have to consider the merits of the proposal that is currently before me.

Conditions

23. I have had regard to the list of conditions that have been suggested by the Council. In order to provide certainty with regard to what has been granted planning permission, I have included a condition which specifies the approved plans and drawings. In the interests of the appearance of the existing house and the surrounding conservation area, it is also necessary to impose a condition requiring the external materials used in the development to match those of the existing house.
24. As set out above, in order to minimise the potential for overlooking of the neighbouring property, it is necessary to impose a condition requiring that the window of the dormer serving the ensuite bathroom in the extension is fitted with obscure glazing. Whilst neither party has suggested such a condition, bathroom windows are routinely fitted with obscure glass for privacy reasons and a condition to this effect would neither be unreasonable, nor unexpected.

Conclusion

25. I have found that the appeal proposal would comply with the relevant policies in the development plan for the area and there is nothing which would indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR