

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2023

by Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th July 2023

Appeal Ref. APP/X5210/D/23/3319242 15 Crediton Hill, London NW6 1HS

- 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 and Mrs Warren against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application ref. 2022/3362/P, dated 7 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is "*Enlargement of existing rear dormer and erection of new rear dormer with Juliet balconies*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for enlargement of existing rear dormer and erection of new rear dormer with Juliet balconies at 15 Crediton Hill, London NW6 1HS in accordance with the terms of the application ref. 2022/3362/P, dated 7 August 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 numbered:

CH_EX_LP_RevA_D2, CH_PP_BP_RevA_D3, CH_EX_GA_2ND_RevA_D2,
CH_PP_GA_2ND_RevA_D3, CH_EX_RP_RevA_D2, CH_PP_RP_RevA_D3,
CH_EX_GE_Rear_RevA_D2, CH_PP_GE_West_RevA_D3,
CH_EX_GE_North_RevA_D2, CH_PP_GE_North_RevA_D3,
CH_EX_GE_Side_RevA_D2, CH_PP_GE_South_RevA_D3,
CH_EX_GS_A-A_RevA_D2 and CH_PP_GS_A-A_RevA_D3.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building, unless otherwise specified in the application.

Preliminary matters

2. I have also dealt with another appeal (ref. APP/X5210/D/23/3321358) on this site. It is the subject of a separate decision.
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3. There is no dispute that the appeal site falls within the West End Green Conservation Area (WEGCA), even though the "conservation area" referred to in the decision notice is not given a name. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (s72 of the Act) requires that when assessing proposals for new development within a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
4. There have been a considerable number of recent planning applications at the appeal property. The most relevant in the context of this appeal are the extant planning permissions granted under ref. 2021/6229/P in February 2022 and ref. 2022/3373/P in November 2022. The former related to a new rear dormer window (to match the existing rear dormer window) and a new gable detail to the rear roof slope, whilst the latter would see various changes, including the rear first floor windows being replaced with new doors and Juliet balconies.

Main issue

5. The main issue is the impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host property and the WEGCA.

Reasons

6. The WEGCA encompasses Crediton Hill which is a residential street with sizeable houses of mainly Edwardian origins following a steep gradient upwards towards West End Lane. The WEGCA Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011 (AMS) indicates that the WEGCA's special character originates from, amongst other things, the village character centred on the commercial "spine" street of West End Lane, the homogeneous displays of Victorian and Edwardian domestic architecture and planning and the substantial houses for professional families.
7. Virtually all the buildings on Crediton Hill are listed in the AMS as making a positive contribution to the WEGCA. No. 15, a good-sized, 2-storey semi-detached house with further rooms in the roof space and rear ground floor extensions, appears on the list, along with its partner property, no. 17. They stand a short distance to the north of the junction with Fawley Road.
8. The rear roof slope of no. 15, which benefits from a dormer window, is not open to proper public views. From private viewpoints at the rear, sizeable dormers are present in the immediate surroundings of the appeal site on the rear roof slopes of the partner property and of 15 and 17 Fawley Road which overlook the far end of the back garden of the appeal property. The partner property also has a large rear balcony which is not set in within the roof slope. When viewing from the appeal site, any rhythm or harmony that may exist across the rear roof slopes and rear dormers along the same side of Crediton Hill is broken up by the staggered formation of the semi-detached houses and the rising land levels to the north. These site-specific considerations in the immediate context of the appeal property cannot be ignored.
9. Moreover, the AMS says that extensions to the front and side roof slopes are likely to break the important regular composition of the roof lines and so harm the appearance of the WEGCA. There is no suggestion that extensions to the rear roof slopes are likely to have the same negative effect or should be

similarly restricted. The appeal scheme would plainly have no impact on the Crediton Hill street scene.

10. Although the existing rear dormer window as enlarged and the new matching rear dormer window would be taller than the existing and approved rear dormer windows and the existing first floor windows below, they would be set well into the roof slope and be set behind 1100 mm high, grey painted metal balustrades. These physical arrangements would tend to disguise and downplay their height. As a result, the outward visual expression made by the white-painted timber doors would not be wholly out of proportion with the depth of the windows below. Besides, in terms of size and proportion they would fall well short of the width of those first floor windows. I am satisfied that the scheme would pay sufficient consideration to the hierarchy of window openings. Of course, if the appellants also implemented the extant planning permission ref. 2022/3373/P, the hierarchy of resulting windows would be likely to shift even further in favour of the appeal scheme.
11. The proposal avoids the rather unfortunate positioning, appearance, size and scale of the rear dormer and balcony at the partner property. The proposed dormers, including their Juliet balconies, would be subordinate in size to the retained area of the original rear roof slope, be set well away from the margins of that roof, provide a good level of symmetry to the rear elevation and have a strong proportion of glazing in relation to solid areas. The balconies and planters would be modest and be set in within the roof slope. The metal balustrades would have a very limited visual impact and the inclusion of a narrow space for planters would be entirely appropriate. Only the plants, rather than the boxes themselves, would be likely to be visible to observers in other private gardens hereabouts.
12. The scheme would not distort or otherwise harm the rear roofscape across 15 and 17 Crediton Hill which, when viewing the WEGCA in the round, has only a limited degree of architectural appeal and conservation interest. The proposal would fit in with existing roof lines, compare favourably to the closest examples of existing roof extensions and be wholly in proportion to the existing building. It would respect the guidance in the AMS, the Camden Planning Guidance *Design* 2021 and the Camden Planning Guidance *Home Improvements* 2021.
13. Drawing these threads together, I consider that the proposed development would exhibit a high, site-specific and sensitive design quality, be sufficiently complementary and sympathetic to the original parent building in terms of size, scale, siting and design, be respectful of the local context and surroundings and conserve the significance, character and appearance of the WEGCA.
14. I find on the main issue that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the host property and the WEGCA. As such, there would be no conflict with the aims of s72 of the Act, Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 or Policies 2 and 3 of the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2015. When read together, these policies seek to ensure high quality design in development and to preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. There would be respect for the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it relates to achieving well-designed places and conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Conditions

15. In addition to a condition setting a time limit for the commencement of development, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the relevant approved drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. I have also imposed the Council's other suggested condition which would stipulate the use of matching materials, in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the building and the WEGCA.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised and the absence of objections from local residents and local organisations, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR