



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2023

by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/23/3317729

77 Hartham Road, Islington, London N7 9JJ

- 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 Henry Robinson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref: P2022/4098/FUL, dated 29 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is to "raise roof ridge height, loft conversion with front rooflights and rear dormer"
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have amended the address in the banner from that which is on the application form to remove repetition.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the Hillmarton Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the Hillmarton Conservation Area (HCA) where S.72(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area, and great weight should be given to the heritage assets conservation.
5. Islington's Hillmarton Conservation Area Design Guidelines 2002 (the HCADG) provides a general description of the HCA and identifies that the area was first developed in the 1850's and 1860's with three or four storey semi-detached villas and terraces. The area is predominantly residential and has spacious scale, with wide streets, mature landscaping along with three churches, all of which contribute positively to the area. The HCADG¹ confirms that "*the generally consistent historical and architectural quality of the architecture gives the area a special character and appearance which it is considered essential to preserve and enhance*". On my site visit, I observed elements of consistency

¹ Paragraph 32.2

and uniformity in the overall architectural design and detail across the HCA, and I agree with this assessment of significance.

6. The appeal relates to a mid-terraced, four-storey, building which is sited within a row of 6 terraced properties (No's 75 – 85 Hartham Road). The front elevation of the group has a strong uniformed architectural rhythm and appearance. The roof of each dwelling is separated by a large chimney and/or parapet. With the exception of No.81, which contains two rooflights, the roof slopes remain largely unaltered. There is some slight variation in roof heights, including a roof hatch in the appeal property. This variation is not overly apparent from Hartham Road, although there is greater visibility and appreciation of the roof slope from Freegrove Road. To the rear the dwellings have a mix of modest projections of varying form, up to three storeys in height. Again, the rear roof slopes are generally unbroken with the exception of a small box dormer at No.85 and two rooflights at No.81, but generally the roof slope has not been adversely compromised. The rear of the terrace is visible from a side road off Hungerford Road, where the variation in ridge height is more noticeable. Some of the elevational architectural detailing, uniformity and rhythm has been lost to the rear of the group. Nonetheless, it is considered that the appeal dwelling, and its terraced row, contribute positively towards the character and appearance of the HCA.
7. The appeal proposals include a number of alterations to the roof of the property. This includes the modest raising of the roof. The existing large chimney stack and roof parapets which separate the dwellings, break up the roof line continuity of the terrace. The overall height would remain below the height of these separating features, which would visually contain the modest increase in height proposed. Noting other modest increases in ridge height within the group, I consider that this alteration could be carried out without being harmful to the character and appearance of the building, terrace, or the HCA.
8. The proposed rooflights would be positioned high within the front roof slope. Their position and number proposed, would visually break the largely unbroken roof slope of the terrace by adding visual clutter. Furthermore, their positioning would be poorly aligned with existing openings, thereby failing to respect the existing vertical alignment, visually unbalancing the rhythm of the terrace. While not overly apparent from Hartham Road, I consider that they would be apparent from Freegrove Road from where the roof slope is visible. While I have observed other front rooflights in the surrounding area, these are generally limited to one or two per dwelling, or within groups of buildings where rooflights are more prevalent. As such, I do not find them to be directly comparable. In any event, the appeal proposals would add to the proliferation of such features within this terrace and the wider HCA. For the reasons set out I consider the rooflights would be harmful to the character and appearance of the HCA, and the harm would not be overcome by the use of conservation style rooflights.
9. The proposed dormer to the rear roof slope would be positioned very close to the eaves and ridge of the roof, while filling much of its width. The majority of roof slope would be lost resulting in a reduction in the appreciation of the historic roof form. This would be particularly apparent from the side road off Hungerford Road where the group is viewed in its entirety. I am mindful of the

existing dormer at No.85, however this is much narrower and set away from the eaves, while its scale is consistent with many of the other roof dormers in the area. Reference has also been made to the approval of a dormer at No.47 Hartham Road². I do not have full details of this decision, including the pre-existing condition. Nonetheless, from the evidence before me, that approved dormer appears to be set in from the roof edges and eaves to a greater degree than the appeal dormer. On my site visit I observed a dormer at this property which is set away from the eaves by some distance, which is consistent with other dormers in that grouping. I do not find these therefore to be directly comparable.

10. For the above reasons I consider that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the HCA, resulting in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021, policies CS8 and CS9 of Islington's Core Strategy 2011, and policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of Islington's Development Management Policies 2013, and guidance contained within the Framework which, amongst other things, requires development to be of high quality design and to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including Conservation Areas. The development would also conflict with the guidance contained within the HCADG which seeks to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the area, and the guidance contained within Islington's Urban Design Guide (2017) which require roof extensions to be sympathetic to the host building and harmonise with the predominant roofline in the vicinity.

Other Matters

11. I am aware that planning permission was granted in 2013 for the raising of the roof and a rear roof dormer³ at the appeal site. However, that decision is of some age, and I have not been provided with full details of that proposal and the considerations behind it. There are material differences between the proposal which, cumulatively, I have found to be harmful to the character and appearance of the HCA. In any event, each proposal should be considered on its merits as I have done.
12. Reference has been made to an appeal decision⁴ for roof development within a Conservation Area, however I have not been provided with full details of that appeal to come to any conclusion on the similarities of the proposals. In any event, for the reasons set out above, I have found the appeal proposals to be harmful.
13. I am sympathetic to the appellants wish to provide more flexible accommodation to the existing property and to facilitate home working. This would be a benefit arising from the proposals albeit a matter to which I can only attach limited weight.
14. It is common ground that the development would not have any adverse effects on living conditions to occupants of adjoining properties which is a neutral matter.

² Ref: P2016/3531/FUL

³ Ref: P2013/2054/FUL

⁴ APP/Q5300/D/21/3274676

15. It is suggested that the roof dormer is the minimum size to facilitate development in the roof. As outlined above, I have observed other dormers in the area which are smaller than that proposed. I also have no evidence of construction costs. Therefore, I can only afford these arguments very limited weight.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

16. I have identified that the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the HCA, through failing to preserve its character and appearance. The preservation of heritage assets is a matter to which I am required to attach considerable importance and great weight⁵. While I have identified some limited benefits of the proposals, these would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to heritage assets that I have identified.
17. For the above reasons, the development conflicts with the Development Plan, and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cleary

INSPECTOR

⁵ NPPF paragraph 199