

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2023

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

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

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## **Appeal Reference: APP/Y5420/D/23/3325164**

### **Land at 17 Holmesdale Road, Hornsey, Haringey, London N6 5TH**

- 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. Taylor against the decision of the London Borough of Haringey Council.
  - The application (reference HGY/2023/0131, dated 13 January 2023) was refused by notice dated 12 April 2023.
  - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "existing roof to be converted into a habitable living area".
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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 in the Highgate Conservation Area.

## **Reasons**

3. Holmesdale Road is located in an attractive part of North London, a short way to the east of Archway Road (the A1). The road is residential in character, characterised by houses in terraces that are quite short for the most part and varied in style and detailed design, as a result, no doubt, of the practicalities of the development process as they were built. The road slopes upwards from the south-east to the north-west and development has been adapted to the underlying ground levels, with stepped terraces. This adds variety to the surroundings but it erodes the classical character of the building form, creating a rather picturesque townscape. The area is within the Highgate Conservation Area.
4. Over the years, some of the houses in the road have been altered, for example by painting or rendering the front elevations. In any case, there are marked variations in the original designs. There is a terrace of two-storey houses under a shallow hipped roof in the lower part of the road (including number 17) but, higher up the road, the three-storey houses have steeply pitched roofs, presenting gables on the front elevations, at number 19 and its other

- neighbours beyond. A considerable degree of homogeneity has been preserved, however, with brickwork predominating.
5. The appeal site is located towards the lower end of Holmesdale Road, at the northern-western end of a terrace. The house has been built close up to its side boundary on the north-west, which is at a marked angle to the road and the front elevation of the terrace. The main two-storey part of the house follows the line of the remainder of the terrace but single-storey extensions at the rear add to the appeal property on the ground floor, with a garden area at the rear that projects behind the line of other gardens in the same terrace.
  6. The adjoining properties to the north-west, at numbers 19 and 21, are set back from the road frontage, to take advantage of the angled boundary by creating a wider building that is sited partly behind the front elevation of number 17 and its angled side elevation. As a result of the ground levels, this pair of houses is sited at a higher level than the appeal site (but lower than those beyond, to the north-west, further up the hill).
  7. Number 17 Holmesdale Road has a wider front elevation than its neighbours in the same terrace and it has more elaborate detailing, with what appear to be the elements of a commercial shopfront or the like, in spite of its current residential character. It is stepped up above its neighbour at number 15 and it has a slightly awkward appearance as a result of this and the angled hipped roof. A somewhat ungainly porch has been attached to the front elevation.
  8. It is now proposed to convert and add to the existing roof space, to create an additional bedroom with an en-suite shower room.
  9. 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.
  10. Those formal requirements are reinforced by the 'National Planning Policy Framework', especially at Section 16, which emphasises the importance of conserving or 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'.
  11. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' also 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, although it is recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities.
  12. An emphasis on the importance of protecting heritage assets and of encouraging good design more generally is also to be found in the Development Plan.

13. In particular, Policy HC1 of 'The London Plan' (dated March 2021) identifies the need to conserve the significance of heritage assets, avoiding harm and identifying enhancement opportunities. Policy D6 is concerned with "housing quality and standards" more generally, stating the aim of achieving high quality design and setting out some specific design criteria.
14. Similarly, Policy SP12 of 'Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013-2026' (dated 2017) aims at the conservation of Haringey's heritage assets, while Policy SP11 promotes high standards of design more broadly. Policies DM9, DM1 and DM12 of the "Haringey London Development Management, Development Plan Document" (which was adopted in July 2017) pursue essentially the same objectives.
15. The proposed "conversion" of the existing roof would involve an alteration to the shape of the main roof, by raising the roof and increasing the pitch on its north-western slope, as well as adding a box-shaped dormer to the rear elevation. New rooflights would be inserted in the front roof slope.
16. I am convinced that the resulting form would be awkward and unattractive as an addition to the existing structure, because of the uncharacteristic roof shape that would be created. The scheme would be discordant and incongruous in relation to the existing building and would be visually intrusive in the streetscene, creating a "top-heavy" appearance. In consequence it would harm the character and appearance of the surroundings and would detract from the historic and architectural qualities of the Conservation Area.
17. 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 host building and the streetscene outweigh the benefits of the project. 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