



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2024

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/W/23/3332511

The Penthouse Epirus Mansions, Epirus Road, London SW6 7UJ

- 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 Robert Churcher against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2023/00527/FUL, dated 1 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing fourth floor and construction of a double mansard to provide a replacement residential dwelling and new terrace, refurbishment of building facades and mosaic.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. An accompanied site visit was requested by the appellant's agent but it was not possible to organise access to the property on the appointed day. I am satisfied that the information provided together with my observations from street level are sufficient to enable me to assess the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Walham Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Epirus Mansions is a handsome 4-storey Victorian building to which a mansard extension was added in the late 1980s to form a penthouse flat, the appeal property. It is situated in Epirus Road, a residential street comprising 2 and 3-storey Victorian terraced housing, and is close to the North End Road, a busy shopping street. This area forms part of the Walham Green Conservation Area (CA) and Epirus Mansions, together with the properties in Epirus Road and Epirus Mews and nearby 336-340 North End Road make a clear and significant positive contribution to the appearance of the CA. Due to its height, scale and appearance Epirus Mansions is more akin to the scale and appearance of properties in North End Road, most notably Nos 336-340, than the smaller scale development in Epirus Road and Epirus Mews. It is therefore a relatively prominent building in close-by views from the street.

5. Planning permission was granted at appeal¹ in 2018 for roof level alterations to enable the formation of a roof terrace. There is nothing before me to indicate that this permission is extant or that the scheme approved in 2018 is directly comparable to the appeal proposal. As such I attribute limited weight to this permission and my colleague's observations in the 2018 appeal decision.
6. The appeal proposal would comprise the demolition of the late 1980s mansard addition and its replacement with a double-storey mansard that would extend a significant distance above the property's chimneys and the apexes of the street-facing gable elements. The upper part of the mansard would have a slightly less steep pitch than the lower part and contemporary style dormers would be formed on all sides.
7. Whilst I note that the late 1980s mansard is reasonably hidden in views from the street and is subservient in scale to the host building its replacement by a double-storey mansard would result in a bulky roof form that would not be subservient to the host building. As a consequence, the resulting development would be top-heavy and overly prominent with the upper part of the mansard addition being an incongruous feature in nearby views along Epirus Road, from North End Road and from the houses opposite the appeal property.
8. Due to its height and bulk, I therefore conclude that the appeal proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host building and would fail to preserve, and result in significant harm to, the character and appearance of the CA. This harm would not be outweighed by the removal/relocation of unsightly roof level paraphernalia and the proposed refurbishment of the entrance mosaic.
9. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Policies DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (2018) which, in summary, require extensions to be compatible with the scale and character of existing development, neighbouring properties and their setting; respect and enhance townscapes; and conserve the significance of the historic environment by protecting heritage assets.
10. I note the examples of double-level mansards put forward by the appellant and recognise that these roof forms can be subservient on tall mansion blocks, terraces and block of flats in central parts of London. However, the scale and context of Epirus Mansions is very different from the examples provided and therefore I attribute limited weight to them.
11. I recognise that the proposal would provide enhanced living accommodation for the occupiers of the penthouse and an opportunity to enhance the dwelling's energy efficiency. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest the existing penthouse provides inadequate accommodation or that its energy efficiency cannot be improved by means other than through the erection of a double storey mansard. As such I attribute limited weight to these matters.
12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal ref: APP/H5390/W/17/3190355