



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 April 2025

by David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/W/24/3358195

303 Queensbridge Road, Hackney, London E8 3LX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 20, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GPDO).
 - The appeal is made by Mr Antony Mackintosh of AM Surveying Holdings Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref is 2024/0533.
 - The development proposed is single storey upward extension over existing block of residential flats comprising 2No. two bedroom 3 person flats, each with private amenity space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Various descriptions of the proposal have been given over the course of the application and appeal. I have used the description given on the application form as I consider that this accurately represents the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the external appearance of the building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site consists of a block of flats of an attractive if understated design. It is located on a prominent corner site in an area which is primarily residential in character, although there are some commercial uses on Queensbridge Road as well as the Queensbridge Primary School.
5. The residential properties in the area are primarily a mix of 2-4 storeys. The 4-storey appeal building complements the scale of the residential block on the opposite side of Middleton Road, and although the buildings are of differing designs and arrangements they form an attractive element of the streetscape on opposite corner plots.
6. The window designs and placements of the extension would complement that of the host building, and the shallow hipped roof would respect the extant appeal site and nearby buildings. However, the increase in height resulting from the appeal proposal would disrupt the relationship between the buildings on these prominent corner plots, creating a jarring and obtrusive feature within the streetscape. The increase in the height of the appeal building would also introduce a residential

building of an incongruous scale that would contrast uncomfortably with the form of residential properties in the wider streetscape.

7. The appeal site is close to the Queensbridge Primary School which is a locally listed building and is therefore a non-designated heritage asset. As has been set out in a previous Appeal Decision¹, the School has historical value in illustrating the approach to school architecture and design in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and also aesthetic value in its design and external appearance combined with its imposing size. Its size and height contribute to the importance of the School as a landmark feature on Queensbridge Road, particularly within the context of the more homogenous residential buildings within the streetscape.
8. The appeal proposal would result in an increase in the height of this block of flats. At present, the host building is lower than the nearby principal School building which reinforces the School's prominence as a landmark feature within the streetscape. Although the principal School building is separated from the appeal site by a lower relatively modern annexe, the appeal site is apparent as part of the setting of the School. The increase in height resulting from the appeal proposal and its prominent corner location would compete visually with the School, and would diminish the ability to appreciate its significance. Consequently, the proposal would lead to great harm to the setting of the School and its significance as a non-designated heritage asset.
9. The appeal site has been subject to a number of proposals previously, as indicated in the appellant's Statement of Case. Compared to previous proposals, the design of the development before me is more sympathetic to the host building, including the use of materials, fenestration and roof design. The appellant emphasises that a previous proposal with a flat roof has been amended to include a pitched roof on the basis of comments from the Council. However, these amendments are not sufficient to address the identified concerns relating to the increased height of the building and the resultant harm to its relationship with the streetscape and the School.
10. Drawing the above together, I conclude that due to its scale, height, massing and location, the proposal would lead to significant harm to the external appearance of the building, including great harm to the setting of the School as a non-designated heritage asset.
11. The GPDO requires that I have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application. The Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes. But even given the location of the site with good access to services, based on the evidence before me the benefits arising from the provision of 2 dwellings would be limited. This would not outweigh the significant harm I have identified, including great harm to the siting of a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would therefore conflict with the Framework when read as a whole in respect of achieving well-designed places as well as conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
12. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal B of Appeal Decisions APP/U5360/W/21/3287425 & APP/U5360/W/22/3292642