



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/25/3362901

53 Huntingdon Street, Islington, London N1 1BX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Gilmour against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref is P2024/3587/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single-storey rear/side extension (in garden area fronting Crescent Street), rear dormer roof extension (with increased ridge height), alterations to fenestration and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Barnsbury Conservation Area, and upon the living conditions at 52 Huntingdon Street in terms of visual impact, privacy, and light.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal relates to a two-storey, end of terrace dwelling facing Huntingdon Street and occupying a corner plot with a side return to Crescent Street. It sits within the Barnsbury Conservation Area (CA) described within the Council's *Conservation Area Design Guidelines 2002* as a predominantly residential area with a special character and appearance derived from its formal late-Georgian/early-Victorian sequences of residential squares and terraces which display a rare quality of consistency and completeness with a wide variety of architectural styles, detailing and materials.
4. The appeal property is part of a terrace of five pitched roof cottages (Nos 53-57 consecutive) dating from the 1950s. No 52 to the rear and positioned along Crescent Street is a detached dwelling of originally similar age and style. The four easterly terraced houses (54-57) are grouped into two pairs, each mirrored in plan. Nos 52 and 53 are different. Although of similar style, No 53 is recessed behind the front elevation of the remainder of the terrace and has a lower ridge. It effectively turns its back onto Huntingdon Street and was originally mirrored by No 52 in terms of style, volume, building height, eaves, and ridge lines. These two properties face each other, including their front entrance doors, across open land to the rear/side of

No 53, which acts as its quasi-front garden, with a right of access for No 52 over it from the street to its front door.

5. The Council properly recognises that the appeal property and terrace does not reflect the ornate style of the CA's older buildings which define its special character and appearance. Although modest in scale and pleasing in form, in my view, given their obvious 1950s style, they have a neutral effect upon the CA's character and appearance, as reflected by the contemporary modern remodelling of No 52, which occurred following a grant of planning permission on appeal in October 2004 (Ref APP/V5570/A/04/1140089). Given this, I do not consider the appeal property to be overly sensitive to some change.
6. The appeal proposal comprises two distinct parts. The ground floor extension would comprise an irregular footprint with a staggered depth. It would have a shallow 2m projection across half of the dwelling's rear elevation adjacent to No 54. This would be contiguous with a deeper, new rear/side elevation that would face Crescent Street to create a repositioned street facing front entrance to the house. This part of the ground floor extension would continue the line of the dwelling's side elevation where it is set back from the pavement along Crescent Street and would project up to and adjoining the front/side wall of No 52 where it would extend beyond the neighbour's right of access providing a visual stop. The front corner walls of the extension nearest to No 52 would be cut away at a 45-degree angle, with the proposed green roof over the whole extension oversailing at a right angle. The roof to the house would also be enlarged by raising the ridge and eaves heights and inserting a rear facing flat roof dormer window with a rounded corner where it would be exposed to Crescent Street. Other alterations include replacement windows and the addition of stone detailing.
7. The Council are of the view that the single-storey extension would fail to appear subordinate to the dwelling. I disagree. It would be obviously single-storey in height and residential in scale. Although deep on plan, its front face to Crescent Street would be entirely proportionate to the scale and bulk of the dwelling's two-storey side gable. The deeper projection capping the end of the access to No 52 would be deeply recessed and would mimic the walled enclosure which currently exists at this point in a similar position. Moreover, return frontages to houses fronting Huntingdon Street, especially at the immediate road junction where it bisects Crescent Street, are enclosed in a manner of ways, mostly tight to the back edge of the pavement and as part of the frontage property. There is no rhythm or consistency and little by way of gaps between neighbouring buildings. The appeal proposal would simply add to this mix.
8. The design approach is unique, but at street level, there is again significant variation to the buildings including contemporary modern design with extensive glazing, as at No 52, set amongst traditional stucco render facades to others. Materials used in the immediate proximity of the appeal site also vary. The combined use of matching brickwork, reconstituted Portland stone columns, which would take their cue from the late Georgian features throughout the CA and which would match other feature details proposed at No 53, along with contemporary glazed panels, would complement the local materials palette and add interest and relief to a remodelled and coherent frontage. At street level I find the changes to the appeal property to be neither overly dominant nor discordant within the immediate context and varied character of Crescent Street.

9. The increased height of the roof eaves and ridge would not be discernible. The dormer would be large, with a strong horizontal emphasis. It would extend right up to the party wall with No 54 and at this point would be set marginally up from the eaves and down from the ridge. It would span the majority width of the roof but with a rounded corner to the outside edge. The choice of contemporary brown zinc cladding would complement the existing brown roof tiles. However, its unconventional form would be highly visible, especially approaching from the north along Crescent Street, where the dwelling's rear roof slope is exposed to full view.
10. Whilst the clipped corner would reduce the dormer's bulk and volume, successfully hiding it from sight from some aspects, its curved shape and uniquely styled window openings would show little respect for the simple pitched roof form and fenestration pattern of the existing dwelling and terrace of which it forms part, where there is a strong degree of visual cohesion at this upper level. In this regard, I do not share the appellant's view that the existing dwelling appears somehow lost and awkward given its difference to others in the terrace and the loss of cohesion with No 52, and therefore open to accommodating such dramatic change. On the contrary, I find the altered roofscape would appear stark and incoherent.
11. I recognise that others in the terrace have large rear box-dormers. Whilst I do not know the planning history to these, they sit reasonably comfortable in their rear roof slopes, squarely framed by the surrounding roof tiles and reasonably consistent and uniform with each other. I do not consider the roof form of No 53 to be so different as to justify such a markedly alternative and unorthodox approach to a roof extension. In this regard the proposal would fail to follow the Council's guidance for dormer windows as contained within their *Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document January 2017*.
12. Overall, I find the proposal when considered as a whole would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and wider street scene. It follows that the character and appearance of the CA would be neither preserved nor enhanced.
13. Having regard to paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework – December 2024 (the Framework), the harm arising from the proposal to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial. However, this does not equate to a less than substantial objection and any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification in line with paragraph 213 of the Framework. Furthermore, in line with the Framework's paragraph 215, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. Given the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, I attach significant weight to the harm that I have identified to the historic environment.
15. Notwithstanding the wholesale changes to No 52 that have occurred, I find the appeal property itself remains as a coherent, albeit slightly different, component part of the terrace and its wider setting. Its neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the CA does not indicate to me that change of any kind would necessarily be beneficial. Some elements of the scheme would be a positive contributor, but not all. There would therefore be no benefits through improvements to the appearance of the property. Improvements to the standard of the living

accommodation at No 53 could be achieved in a variety of alternative ways. When seen in the round, the proposal does not bring forward any public benefits of significant weight sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. As such, there would be conflict with Policies PLAN1, DH1 and DH2 of the Council's Strategic and Development Management Policies September 2023 (SDMP) and Policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021. Between them these seek to ensure all development is of a high quality that responds and contributes positively to local character and distinctiveness, including the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

Living Conditions

16. The entrance to No 52 is currently open and spacious, consistent with that at the appeal property, which is mirrored in form and position. The proposed extensions would remodel No 53 to create a new and coherent front entrance that would present itself to the street frontage. In contrast, the existing entrance to No 52 would become significantly enclosed and constrained by the depth and immediate proximity of the proposed rear extension, notwithstanding its chamfered corner.
17. In my view this would create a sense of unease and oppression at the dwelling's threshold which would be exacerbated by the immediate proximity and expanse of floor to ceiling walled glazing. Anyone occupying the internal hallway within the extended appeal dwelling could be stood extremely close to the neighbour's entrance with views directly into their home with the door open. This would be intrusive and unneighbourly. I understand that land immediately adjacent to the access leading to the front door at No 52 is within the ownership of the appeal property, but as an open outside space, its current potential for intrusion would be considerably more limited by its occasional use compared with an internal living space with a permanent outlook.
18. Given the absence of any meaningful fenestration to the elevation at No 52 facing the appeal site, I accept that there would be no significant impact from the ground floor extension upon the neighbour's living conditions relating to existing levels of daylight and sunlight. Neither am I persuaded that the layout and configuration of the extension, with the oversailing roof corner supported by stone columns, would offer any realistic opportunities for concealment. The divide between the public and private realm would remain to be obvious. However, my impression overall is that the proposal would impose itself harmfully upon the living conditions at No 52 as an oppressive form of development that would diminish levels of privacy by reason of its proximity and design. In this regard there would be further conflict with SDMP Policy PLAN1 as far as it seeks to ensure that new development does not undermine the quality of existing development.

Conclusion

19. Notwithstanding my findings in relation to the design and appearance of the single-storey extension, for the reasons given I find the development overall would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. There would also be harm to the living conditions at No 52. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan INSPECTOR