



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2025

Appeal A: APP/V5570/Y/25/3358721

49 Thornhill Road, Islington, London N1 1JS

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
- The appeal is made by Mr Tom Leahy against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
- The application reference is P2024/2188/LBC.
- The works proposed are restoration work to the outside of the building, including remedial works to the brickwork and stucco and replacement of gutters and windows. Revised front and rear garden design and levels. Alterations to existing outrigger extension, through the removal of modern alterations and the installation of a large heritage sash window. Reconfiguration to the lower ground floor. A new full width extension to the rear on the Lower Ground Floor. Refurbishment to the interior of the house, including layout changes on the first floor and attic. Rebuilding the roof - including a minor readjustment of the roof pitch and the installation of dormer windows. Installation of a new staircase from the 1st floor to the attic and replacement of staircase from lower ground floor to ground floor.

Appeal B: APP/V5570/W/25/3363231

49 Thornhill Road, Islington, London N1 1JS

- 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 Tom Leahy against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
- The application reference is P2025/0210/FUL.
- The development proposed is restoration work to the outside of the building, including remedial works to the brickwork and stucco and replacement of gutters and windows. Revised front and rear garden design and levels. Alterations to existing outrigger extension, through the removal of modern alterations and the installation of a large heritage sash window. Reconfiguration to the lower ground floor. A new full width extension to the rear on the Lower Ground Floor. Refurbishment to the interior of the house, including layout changes on the first floor and attic. Rebuilding the roof - including a minor readjustment of the roof pitch and the installation of dormer windows. Installation of a new staircase from the 1st floor to the attic and replacement of staircase from lower ground floor to ground floor.

Decisions

1. Appeal A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The descriptions of works and development above have been taken from the decision notices. While different to the application forms, they more accurately describe the proposals and were also used on the appeal forms.
3. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the proposed works and development would:
 - Preserve the Grade II listed building known as “49 Thornhill Road (No 49)” (Ref: 1209601) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses,
 - Preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barnsbury Conservation Area; and
 - Preserve the setting, as it relates to the special interest of the nearby listed buildings known as “35 and 37 Belitha Villas”, “Numbers 27 and 29 and railings attached to number 27”, “Numbers 31 and 33 and attached railings” and “51 Thornhill Road”¹.

Reasons

Listed Building

5. No 49 was formerly and is currently a single dwelling, having at the time of listing, previously been used as an office. It has a symmetrical front elevation with central portico to the entrance with columns and moulded architraves to the windows. The upper ground floor of the property is raised to create a piano nobile with lightwells largely hidden to the front for what would have been the service area on the lower ground floor. A single storey extension was added later and has subsequently been separated creating 49A.
6. The significance of No 49 lies in part, in its architectural and historic interest being a good example of a one-off designed Victorian property. While being a ‘one-off’ rather than part of the terraces and groups of villas nearby, it exhibits many of the materials and architectural detailing with other buildings in the area. There is also historical and architectural interest relating to the property having been occupied by James Howel Boekbinder, a Dutch manufacturer of carton Pierre. The unusual carton Pierre detailing within the building is attributed to him. While there have been alterations to the building internally and externally, and some areas being far more ornate in their design and detailing, it retains much of its historic form, layout and function.
7. There is no consistent pattern of glazing or type of windows at the property, including on the same elevations and they do not all appear to be of the same age. Those to the rear first floor appear most recent and have little historic or aesthetic value given their appearance. There is, however, no conclusive evidence that the appeal property itself was affected by bomb damage and that the casement windows in place on both front and back elevations were put in after World War II. There are several historic windows at the property, including on the front elevation.
8. Given the above, the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is primarily associated with the layout, internal and external appearance of the property and how that supported the day-to-day lives of past occupants.

¹ Refs: 1195477, 1195475, 1195476 and 1297981

Windows

9. The new windows would uniformly be timber sash reflecting some of the existing and likely historic materials and styles used at the building. Nevertheless, all the windows would be replaced. The existing windows are single glazed, and many retain a traditional pattern of glazing. This includes the front where there is already a symmetry to that elevation to the sash and casement windows. In addition, the proposed windows would be double rather than single glazed. Moreover, although from my observations several may need repair works, no detailed information has been provided to demonstrate they are incapable of being repaired or why other options such as secondary glazing which is in place for some windows would not achieve the same thermal improvements. The fabric of the historic windows would be lost.
10. Furthermore, there are no detailed plans of the proposed windows, to show how they would sit within the reveal or relate to the shutters in place at several of them. In addition, I do not have detailed plans showing the thickness of glass, glazing bars, frames, or any mouldings, hanging counterbalancing weights and decorative elements such as horns. As such, I cannot be sure that the design of the proposed windows would be suitable in this regard or the effect of them on the retained fabric of the building.
11. There may have been discussions over changes to the proposed windows, however, I have assessed the information before me. Given the importance of these details for considering the special interest of the building, it would not be appropriate to impose a condition requiring such details being agreed after any permission/consent being granted.

Rear and closet wing extensions and alterations

12. The existing conservatory has removed of part of the rear wall at lower ground floor level and there is an area of different coloured brick around the window the other side of the closet wing. Nevertheless, the appeal scheme would require the removal of much of the remaining parts of the rear wall, internal and external closet wing walls, panelling, external stairs and historic openings at lower ground floor level, thereby losing the historic fabric of the building and changing its historic layout.
13. The proposed lower ground floor extension would result in the closet wing appearing cut off. The alterations to the openings on the closet wing would bring an element of symmetry but this would fundamentally alter its utilitarian appearance. The closet wing would have provided a more functional purpose. The insertion of the double height internal area and large vertical window further erode the simple functional purpose and appearance this part of the building would have had and currently does as WC's and storage. The new stucco parapet and fascia would also elevate the closet wing beyond its simpler historic appearance and compete with the rest of the rear elevation and the more elaborate front elevation detailing of the building.
14. The rear extension would clearly be read as a contemporary addition. However, although at lower ground floor level, the rear extension would become an imposing feature as it would stretch across the whole of the rear elevation and given its depth and bulky form. As such, it would not replicate or echo the far more discrete existing closet wing projection. The lowering of the ground levels to the rear would

make it more visible from nearby properties. The flat roof, large rooflights, windows and external materials are not in keeping and would jar with the historic appearance and features of the building. The large space across the rear elevation linking both sides of the lower ground floor would erode the historic plan form of the building.

15. The roof lantern and elongated closet wing window would also emphasise the incongruity by increasing the amount of daylight entering those areas, further eroding the hierarchy of the layout and staircase compartment. Although kitchen/service use would be retained, this lower ground floor level would compete with the historic designed grandiosity of the piano nobile level.
16. There would be a Juliet balcony with railings at the rear of the closet wing. Nonetheless, the existing railings fabric would be lost, and the proposed railings would not relate to the rear doorway and external stairs as they would be removed, thereby losing their existing function. Moreover, this would be an alien feature to the building at odds with its existing character.
17. The closet wing itself would have likely been a later addition to the building. Nonetheless, the provision of a double height nook and library would not reflect the same upgrading of the building to meet changing living expectations as the sanitary improvements that likely led to the closet wing being introduced in the first instance.
18. The extension, implications on the layout and changes to the closet wing would disrupt the historic pattern and use of the rear and lower ground floor. It would elevate this part of the building, challenging the hierarchy of the building, and wholly subsuming its simple utilitarian form.

Roof alterations

19. The existing roof is relatively discrete given the lack of features, openings and its pitch. Although it would still be hipped and more symmetrical, the proposal would create a far bulkier roof that at present, with a different pitch and deep overhang areas. While found on some nearby properties, it has not been shown this form of roof was characteristic of the appeal building or that it is the only way to address water ingress. The proposed roof would alter the vertical hierarchy of the building and result in it becoming a more dominant feature. The scale and inclusion of dormer windows to both front and rear elevations would draw the eye. This would detract from existing prominent historic elements such as the portico and window detailing.
20. It is suggested that stairs to, and accommodation in, the attic space was previously in place for storage or staff. Although parts of the roof material do not appear to be historic, there is no clear evidence of when it was put in place and no photographic or other compelling indication to demonstrate a different historic roof shape from the current one. The 1875 OS map shows a slight step out to the rear of the building, as is the case at present and which would be lost with the appeal scheme. While more accommodation would be provided, regarding optimum use, the property is already a dwelling, and this purpose would not cease in the absence of the proposal.

21. Therefore, I cannot be sure that the proposed roof and attic works would relate to how it was used by past occupants or replicate and relate to the historic narrative of the property.

Internal alterations

22. There would also be alterations to create the new stairs to the enlarged attic space. Reference is made to the verbal recollection of someone who knew the house in the past recalling a staircase to the attic. Notwithstanding this, while there is a high-level window above the storage area, this, and the appearance of the handrail itself, are not conclusive. There is no substantive evidence to support the further stairs. Even if in a traditional format, the introduction of the staircase would erode the spaciousness to the first-floor landing at present from the existing open layout and ceiling height.
23. The removal of the existing en-suites in Bedroom 1 and Bedroom 4 would open up and restore the historic layout of these rooms. However, the relocation of the existing fireplace in Bedroom 2 to Bedroom 4 would alter the fabric of the building. The works associated with installing bathroom facilities into Bedroom 2 would erode the understanding and appreciation of the historic plan form of the first floor. At first floor level the layout would further be disrupted by the alteration, removal of or closing up of doorways and internal walls.
24. The existing bathtub in Bedroom 2 and en-suite adjacent are located above some of the carton Pierre works below where there is evidence of damage to the ceiling. It is unclear how the new bathroom would ensure the carton Pierre detailing, a feature of considerable importance, would be protected. The new bathroom would include works close to existing detailing such as architrave and close to the central front window. There is little detail of how the new facilities would affect these existing features and protect the important ground floor ceiling and walls below from water.
25. It is suggested that existing voids would be utilised for services. Nonetheless, here and for the other areas where new services in the building are proposed, there is limited details of how the historic fabric of the building would be protected.
26. Much of the historic internal fabric appears to have been removed at lower ground floor level. Notwithstanding this, it retains a utilitarian character which contrasts with the floor above. As such, it remains the functional service area of the property at present and its historical layout is largely legible.
27. While the rear part of the lower ground floor would be opened up into the new extension, the front section would have new internal partitions. These would be uncharacteristically for the building, timber glazed, although no details of how these would look have been provided. In addition, while this floor would be an obvious modern area, there is no evidence that the removal of the modern ceiling to expose joists would reflect any historic form of this lower ground floor. In the absence of any detailed plans for the proposed staircase up to the upper ground floor, I am unable to be sure it would be appropriate and not further dilute the hierarchy of the property.
28. There are several areas where repairs or restoration are mentioned. This includes to the carton Pierre wall and ceiling features at ground floor level. It has not been shown what this would involve, the extent of the works required or any

methodology for carrying it out. These are impressive features and an important feature relating to its special interest.

29. Again, given the level of uncertainty over the nature and extent of the works, and the need to ensure that a full assessment of the effect of the scheme on the special interest of the building can be made, it would not be reasonable to impose a condition relating to the repair works. This is also the case for measures to prevent potential water leaks and the uncertainty over the proposed additional underpinning of the house, fire prevention measures or requirements of Building Regulations.
30. There would be chimney breasts removed within the lower ground floor kitchen. There are chimney breasts above and the appeal does not provide sufficient information to show how those above would be supported structurally or why these need to be removed. As above, it would not be reasonable to impose a condition for further details. Works to the floorboards in many rooms, would remove and alter the fabric of the building. This has not been sufficiently justified.

Front Garden

31. The layout of the front garden area and railings relates well to similar features in the streetscene. The existing small shed is not conspicuous being to one corner and not directly in front of any window. Notwithstanding this, its removal would be beneficial.
32. The proposal would clear the existing unkempt vegetation, and works would include repairs to the cracks and other areas of damage to the front of the building. But it has not been demonstrated that the proposed works are necessary or the only means of addressing this.
33. The excavation to the front of the building and creation of further steps, other than at the portico would allow more light into the rooms they serve. Nonetheless, they would undermine the stature of the existing portico entrance and detract attention away from it with the more open areas around it. The proposal would also expose the lower ground floor windows and involve the removal of the security bars in front of them drawing further attention to these previously simple, functional areas. Furthermore, it is unclear what structural works would be required and what built form beneath the portico and garden would be revealed.

Conclusion on the effect on the listed building No 49 and heritage balance

34. The new extension would be located to the rear and being at lower ground floor level would not be overly visible in public or private views. Furthermore, many of the changes relate to the internal parts of the building. Despite this, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
35. Therefore, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Due to the number of concerns and several areas where detailed information is absent, the proposal would lead to a moderate level of less than substantial harm.
36. There would be public benefits from greater energy efficiency and sustainable construction associated with the works, and improvements to the housing stock

and for occupiers from a more modern and extended property. Still, these would each be small given the scale of the scheme.

37. There would be public benefits from some of the works to the building. These include the opening up of some rooms, removal of the conservatory, the principle of restoration of the Carton Pierre as well as other repairs and alterations to better protect the building or reflect historic elements of the building. The removal of the existing shed would be beneficial as would repairs to the brickwork, including near the eaves to the front elevation and new guttering works to help prevent water ingress. Nonetheless, due to the extent of the works and lack of detail surrounding some of them, the weight they attract together is moderate. This does not outweigh the harm that would be caused.
38. These factors do not represent clear and convincing justification for the harm to the asset involved. Great weight is given to the assets' conservation. The benefits clearly do not outweigh the considerable importance and weight in the planning balance from the harm to the designated heritage asset.
39. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the listed building. It would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, as well as the heritage protection aims of the National Planning Policy Framework. Insofar as they are relevant, the proposal would be contrary to heritage and design aims of Policies PLAN1, DH1 and DH2 of the Islington Local Plan Strategic and Development Management Policies.

Barnsbury Conservation Area (CA)

40. The significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, comes in part, from the architecture and layout of its historic buildings. The area being a fine example of formal late-Georgian/early-Victorian residential developments in London, including planned squares and terraces. As well as the buildings themselves, the verdancy of the streets and squares also contributes to the significance. There is, however, some variation in the detailing and features of the building within the CA. This includes a varied roofscape in places. The appearance, form and height are not uniform with several properties having historic or altered roofs that are prominent in the streetscene and examples of dormer windows.
41. Being a Victorian villas style property exhibiting many features typical of the CA, such as the portico, No 49 makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
42. The Barnsbury Conservation Area Design Guidelines state that new or enlarged dormer windows or rooflights on the front or side slopes of exposed pitched roofs will not be permitted. The proposed roof would have a greater bulk altering the pitch and ridge. The dormers would also introduce new features to the building.
43. Notwithstanding this, there is no consistency to the roofscape in Thornhill Road or some nearby streets including ones with deep overhangs and dormer windows that are prominent in the streetscene. It is in this varied context that the proposed roof would be seen in both public and private views, and it would not be overly large in comparison to other properties. The appeal building is not part of a row or group of similar properties in terms of scale or appearance. Therefore, the roof would not disrupt the flow of any roofscape. The dormers would retain the

symmetry to the front elevation and not be large in themselves. They also reflect the style of some of those found in the area.

44. Given the scale and less prominent location of the rear extension and works, along with the more varied rear elevations and frontage arrangements found nearby, those changes would not harm the CA.
45. Thus, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA.

Nearby listed buildings

46. There are several other listed buildings nearby. The significance of 35 and 37 Belitha Villas comes, in part from, their villa style appearance as a pair in a symmetrical plain classical style. Similarly, the significance of Numbers 27 and 29 and railings attached to number 27, includes their portico entrance and villa style design and detailing. Numbers 31 and 33 and attached railings has its significance, again in part from the semi-detached villa style design with raised porticos and sash windows. For 51 Thornhill Road, the significance, so far as relevant to this appeal, comes in part from the double fronted stepped entrance to the main elevation and traditional window appearance. Therefore, their special interest derives, so far as relevant to these appeals, from their architectural appearance.
47. The setting of these assets includes the pleasing variation in the architectural form of the buildings within spacious, tree lined streets. This setting provides the context for the appreciation of the buildings and directly contributes to their special interest. Many of the external features of the scheme would not be untypical of the wider area and the nearby listed buildings are already experienced and viewed with them. The appeal property would continue to form part of this varied form and the setting of these buildings, insofar as it contributes to their significance and special interest would not be harmed. Thus, the proposal would not detract from the setting of the listed buildings or the ability to appreciate and understand them.

Other Matters

48. There are examples of extensions and alterations at nearby buildings, including works to the roofs, rear extensions and at listed buildings. However, none relate to the appeal building or for the same range of works and development as proposed in this appeal. Some were not listed buildings. Therefore, while there are comparable elements, they would have had different existing character and appearance, and/or special interest, as well as factors to weigh in the balance. They are, therefore, materially different to the scheme before me.

Conclusion

49. Insofar as relevant, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
50. For the reasons given above the appeals should be dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR