
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2013

by S M Watson BA(Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 10 October 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/A/13/2195274

14-43 Northview, Tufnell Park Road, London, N7 0QB

- 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 Mark Smith against the decision of The Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P121620, dated 19 July 2012, was refused by notice dated 21 February 2013.
 - The development proposed is erection of a fourth floor above the existing flats 14-43 Northview providing seven units consisting of 2 one-bedroom, 4 two-bedroom and 1 three-bedroom flats. Enlarging the existing refuge chamber to provide recycling facilities and provision of cycle storage in two of the existing garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and upon the building itself.

Procedural Matters

3. The application form and decision notice describe the address as "3 Northview", however, the appeal form states "14-43 Northview". I consider the appeal form to contain the accurate address.
 4. Since the appeal application was refused, the Council has adopted the Islington Local Plan: Development Management Policies, June 2013 (DMP). The Council says that Policy DM2.1 of this document replaces Policies D3, D4 and D11 of the Islington Unitary Development Plan 2002. There are some differences between the old and new policies but as the principal aims and objectives of both are to encourage good design, I do not consider that any party is prejudiced by this change.
 5. In addition, I note that the draft policies DM1 and DM3 have been re-numbered DM2.1 and DM2.3 in the adopted version of the DMP.
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Reasons

6. The block of flats is situated behind the taller building, 1-12 Northview, Tufnell Park Road, and is arranged in a horseshoe-like form. It dates from the 1930s and has Art Deco style detailing on its principal elevation. The front of the building has a certain regularity and rhythm which is formed by the ordered positioning of windows and bays. The cream rendered bay windows which stand out from the orange/brown brickwork, and the projecting stairwell bays with long and tall Crittall style windows, provide a vertical balance to the long low-rise façade.
7. From the courtyard, the Grade 2 listed Art Deco Odeon cinema is seen beyond 1-12 Northview. The cluster of these closely sited three 1930s buildings relate to each other in terms of their period and design. Therefore, they provide architectural and historic interest to the character and appearance of the area. The appeal building is an important undesignated heritage asset within this group.
8. The proposed additional floor would be faced in zinc and would have grey powder coated door and window frames and whilst the main front wall of the extension would be set back about 1 metre from the original front elevation, a frosted glass safety screen would sit near the edge of the existing roof. The new storey would run along almost the entire length of the block. At the rear of the building the extension would be angled over the existing eaves to create a mansard effect.
9. Given the length of the extension and its proximity to the edges of the roof, it would be highly visible from the ground. I note the appellant's comments that the site is surrounded by taller buildings but, nevertheless, the block can be seen from the access on Tufnell Park Road and also from Holbrooke Court.
10. Because of the proposed relatively flat contemporary elevations and the use of grey materials, the additional floor would appear in stark contrast to the detailed deco style front elevation of the existing building. The uneasy contrast of materials and detailing would result in a visually incongruous and top heavy addition.
11. I acknowledge the appellant's comments that the rear elevation of the building has little visual interest. However, the scale of the extension and the contrast of the existing and proposed materials would not improve its appearance and would give it an unacceptably dominant presence over Holbrooke Court.
12. I also appreciate that the appellant has used over-sailing eaves on the roof of the extension in order to attempt to lower sight lines and reduce the visual impact of the development. Nevertheless, this detail does not overcome the proposed overall scale, form and use of incompatible materials.
13. I am conscious that many of the original Crittall windows have been replaced with UPVC ones and that the majority of the proposed windows would line up with the existing. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm caused by the scale and form of the proposed extension.

14. I note the examples of other roof extensions provided by the appellant but none are directly comparable to the appeal proposal. In any event, I do not know the circumstances surrounding their construction.
15. The parking and the green space in the courtyard is wide and spacious and I do not consider that the roof extension would be overbearing upon it but this does not outweigh the harm I have described above.
16. I conclude that the proposed development would have a detrimental effect upon the character and appearance of the area and upon the building itself. It would therefore be contrary to London Plan 2011 Policies 7.1 which seeks to ensure that the design of new buildings should help reinforce or enhance the character of the neighbourhood; 7.4 which seeks to ensure that development has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass; and 7.6 which seeks, amongst other things, that development comprises details and materials that complement, but not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character.
17. There would be conflict with Islington's Core Strategy Policies CS8 and CS9 which together indicate that the scale of development will reflect the character of the area and that high quality architecture and urban design are key to protecting Islington's built environment.
18. There would also be conflict with DMP Policies DM2.1 which seeks to ensure that development is of a high quality and indicates that it should reinforce and complement local distinctiveness; and DM2.3 which indicates that development should not unjustifiably harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.
19. The proposed development would furthermore be contrary to Section 2.2.6 of Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2006 which indicates that rooflines should normally respond to the articulation of the rest of the façade.
20. In coming to my conclusion I have also had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework; paragraph 60 of which says that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Furthermore, paragraph 64 says that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
21. I have considered all other matters raised including the representations from interested parties. I have also taken into account the appellant's comments that the proposal would represent sustainable development and would increase local housing choice. However, none of these matters outweigh the harm I find to the character and appearance of the building and area. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Siobhán Watson

INSPECTOR