



## Appeal Decisions

Hearing Held on 25 September 2018

Site visit made on 25 September 2018

**by Claire Searson MSc PGDip BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC**

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

**Decision date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

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### **Appeal A Ref: APP/V5570/W/16/3157154**

#### **Former London Mail Centre. 116-118 Upper Street, Islington, N1 1AA**

- 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 Sager House (Almeida) Ltd against the decision of London Borough of Islington.
  - The application Ref P2014/1164/FUL, dated 18 March 2014, was refused by notice dated 23 February 2016.
  - The development proposed is the erection of overhead 'canopy' above the new entrances approved under Listed Building Consent Ref. P10162 and P110013.
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### **Appeal B Ref: APP/V5570/Y/16/3157157**

#### **Former London Mail Centre. 116-118 Upper Street, Islington, N1 1AA**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Sager House (Almeida) Ltd against the decision of London Borough of Islington.
  - The application Ref P2014/1163/LBC, dated 18 March 2014, was refused by notice dated 23 February 2016.
  - The works proposed are the erection of overhead 'canopy' above the new entrances approved under Listed Building Consent Ref. P10162 and P110013.
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## **Decision**

1. **Appeal A:** The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of overhead 'canopy' above the new entrances approved under Listed Building Consent Ref. P10162 and P110013 at Former London Mail Centre. 116-118 Upper Street, Islington, N1 1AA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P2014/1164/FUL, dated 18 March 2014, subject to the attached schedule of conditions.
2. **Appeal B:** The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the erection of overhead 'canopy' above the new entrances approved under Listed Building Consent Ref. P10162 and P110013 at Former London Mail Centre. 116-118 Upper Street, Islington, N1 1AA in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P2014/1163/LBC, dated 18 March 2014 and the plans submitted with it subject to the attached schedule of conditions.

### **Procedural Matters**

3. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
4. It was established at the hearing that permission has not been sought for advertisement consent for the canopy. My decisions would not obviate the need for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.
5. The appellants have submitted amended plans as part of the appeals (Ref 03049 D – 10 06 00 01 T4) depicting signage steelwork details. The changes illustrate non-material technical amendments and I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by my determining the appeals on the basis of the amended plans.

### **Main Issue**

6. The main issue for both appeals is the effect of the proposed development and works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of the Angel and Upper Street (North) Conservation Area.

### **Reasons**

7. The appeal property is a Grade II listed building which is a former Post Office dating from 1906. It is 5-storeys in height with a brick façade with stone dressings and banded rustication to the ground floor. It has outer projecting entrance bays and central round arched openings with Gibbs surround and central cartouche depicting 'Northern District Post Office.' Above is a central pediment supported by caryatids at second floor level and Ionic columns at first floor level, with cornice below and console brackets between the ground and first floor.
8. This property forms part of a wider former North London Mail Centre which is located behind the appeal building, including Sorting Office and Supplies Depot, dating from the Edwardian period. The site is located within the Angel and Upper Street (North) Conservation Area (CA) which is a linear CA which follows the route of Upper Street. Development typically comprises of 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings which are positioned on narrow plots. The area has a lively commercial character with residential units above.
9. The site is currently being redeveloped as part of a major regeneration scheme of the former North London Mail Centre as a mixed use, residential, retail, and office scheme of over 20,000sq metres. Consent was originally granted for this development in 2007, with a number of later permissions. The redevelopment of the site is currently in progress with the anticipated opening of the newly created 'Islington Square' in 2019.
10. As part of the regeneration scheme, a number of planning and listed building consents were granted for Block D, No 116-118 Upper Street, as well as non-material amendments for internal and external alterations. The appeal property is designed to form the principle entry point into the wider regeneration site and approved alterations include removal of front railings and ground floor windows to the central round arched openings, removal of the floor and central spine wall to create an open atrium which would lead into the

- site. At my site visit I saw that these works were in progress with the front railings, windows and internal floor removed.
11. I consider that the significance of the listed building derives from its historic interest as an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century purpose built Post Office which formed the 'public face' of the wider Royal Mail estate behind, which was largely hidden from view. Its significance also relates to its architectural interest; the symmetrical front façade is particularly ornate and demonstrable of the early Edwardian architectural fashions of the time in terms of use of materials and styles. The appeal property, as well as the wider former Royal Mail site, positively contributes to the commercial and architectural character of the CA.
  12. The alterations to the building have greatly changed the interior and exterior of the listed property, which has effectively been re-purposed. The Council were able to confirm that those changes would constitute 'less than substantial harm' in today's heritage policy language, which was outweighed by substantial public benefits in terms of the wider regeneration site.
  13. The proposed work comprises of the addition of a curved steel 'I' beam to the front of the building. This would effectively slot between the outer projecting bays, below the cornice between ground and first floor level. It would have a bronze finish and would incorporate individually applied white letters which would be illuminated. It would be attached to the building via steel plates and bolts as well as 2 steel tie bars which would extend to the height of the flat arched windows at first floor level. There would be no roof to the structure. At its widest point, the canopy would project 3m away from the centre of the building.
  14. Based upon the discussions held, as well as my observations from the site visit, while there will be other access point into the regeneration area, the appeal building will represent the primary formal entrance into the site. When viewed from Upper Street, No 116-118 is somewhat recessive in views, partly due to its architectural form with side projecting bays, and partly due to its position to the inside of the arc in the bend to Upper Street.
  15. No specific marketing or viability information was submitted in support of the need for such a canopy sign. However, while the building itself makes for a grand entrance, in light of its specific characteristics and positioning, in combination with the current retail climate, and the scale of the regeneration scheme, I accept the need to signify the presence of the Islington Square development at the appeal property.
  16. As demonstrated by the submitted evidence, the canopy sign has undergone many design iterations. While no site-wide signage strategy has been worked up by the appellant, I do accept that it is right to consider the listed building first and that this would form the basis of a wider signage strategy for the wider development.
  17. The sign is of an undoubtedly modern design, but it is simple in form and I consider that it would complement the building. The curved form of the proposed sign and the extent of its protrusion would, in my view, strike an appropriate balance between the need to advertise the location of Islington Square without forming an overly dominant appendage to the ornate and architecturally significant façade of the building.

18. The listed building in its wider setting along Upper Street is largely experienced in dynamic views as one travels along this road. Some static views from upper floors of adjacent dwellings would also be gauged but the predominant impression of the building within the CA is gained as one travels around the area.
19. In certain static views, architectural features of the listed building would be obscured, however the lack of enclosure to the canopy and its 3m projection would ensure that, in the main, the console brackets and cartouche is revealed and views of these features from pavement level of both sides of Upper Street as one moves along this would be preserved. The general grand impression of the building and its symmetry would not be undermined by the addition of the proposed canopy sign in this position. In light of the structural details supplied in respect of fixings, I am also satisfied that the works would be reversible in the future.
20. The Islington Square development represents a significant new chapter in the use and life of the listed building, re-ordering the entrance into the building from Upper Street and fundamentally changing the ground floor from an enclosed former Post Office, into a light and open arcade. The form and height of the proposed canopy sign would be consistent with that light and open sense of arrival into the building, while preserving the architectural and historic significance of the ornate Edwardian façade and specific detailing, including the cartouche.
21. Overall, taking into account the particular circumstances and having carefully considered all the evidence, I conclude that the works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed building and the Angel and Upper Street (North) Conservation Area. The development would accord with Policies 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016 which in combination seek to protect local character, promote good architecture, including within the public realm, and conserve the significance of heritage assets. The proposals would also accord with Policies CS8 and CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy 2011 and Policies DM2.1 and 2.3 of the Islington Development Management Policies Plan 2013. Together these seek to enhance Islington's character and protect and enhance Islington's built and historic environment through appropriate design and by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail. The heritage-led regeneration aims of Policy AUS1 of the Islington Local Plan Site Allocations 2013 would also be met.
22. Finally the development would accord with the revised National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed by this and future generations.

### **Conditions**

23. I have had regard to the conditions put forward by the Council, as well as the discussions held during the Hearing. For both appeals I have inserted a condition requiring compliance with the submitted plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
24. I have also imposed conditions on both appeals in respect of materials samples and fixing method and positioning. These are necessary in order to protect the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the

CA. Due to the nature of the works, these must be pre-commencement and I have received written confirmation from the appellant with regard to the acceptability of these, in accordance with Section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**Conclusion**

25. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both of the appeals should be allowed.

*C Searson*

INSPECTOR

## **SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS**

### **Appeal A Ref: APP/V5570/W/16/3157154:**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1935-40-DR-5100 Revision C05; 03049 D-10 06 00 01 Rev T4.
- 3) Details and samples of all facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.
- 4) Details of the method and positioning of all fixing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

### **Appeal B Ref: APP/V5570/Y/16/3157157:**

- 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1935-40-DR-5100 Revision C05; 03049 D-10 06 00 01 Rev T4.
- 3) Details and samples of all facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.
- 4) Details of the method and positioning of all fixing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on site. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

## **APPEARANCES**

### FOR THE APPELLANT:

Timothy Corner QC  
Greg Cooper  
Piers Gough CBE RIBA RA  
Peter Woods  
Chris Dunn  
Dougal Ainsley

Landmark Chambers  
Metropolis Planning and Design  
CZWG Architects LLP  
Director, Orme Retail Property  
Sager House (Almedia) Ltd  
Senior Associate, Lewis Silkin Solicitors

### FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

John Kaimakamis  
Rachel Godden

Planning Officer  
Design and Conservation Officer

## **PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING**

- 1 A1 copies of plans.
- 2 Policy AUS1 of the Islington Local Plan Site Allocations 2013.