

THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

Evidence to the Planning Inspectorate, Appeal Inquiry, Regents Wharf, 4-7 June 2019

In this case the society is concerned about the integrity of the Islington locally listed buildings on this site and on the effect the appellants success might have on the broader integrity of the borough's locally listed buildings as a whole.

We accept that one of the problems about the local list is that it is out of date and flawed. For example, what were when the listing was made in 1979 two warehouses in Pembroke Dock next door to the east with gable ends to the canal have clearly been wholly or partly demolished and replaced with a reproduction.

We also accept that since the original listing in 1979 the elevation of 10c has changed with extra windows inserted. But we believe that even with the extra windows the elevation maintains the spirit of the original listing.

There is also the oddity that the original listing does not mention 10a, the All Saints Street frontage of the Thorley complex. There are preparatory documents for the 1979 listing in the Islington History Centre which suggest that the original intention of the council officers at the time was to locally list 10a but at some stage in the process, (these were complicated buildings to assess even in 1979) that part of the listing got missed out. Setting all that aside, we believe that the effective disappearance of what was listed as Pembroke Dock makes the survival of the Regents Wharf locally listed buildings in their present form all the more important. In their cross-examination of Mr. Bowring the appellants were clearly trying to make the case that there are lots of heritage assets in the Regents Canal West Conservation Area. But Pembroke Wharf as originally listed no longer exists and so makes the survival of Regents Wharf in its current form all the more important.

We understand the appellants point that these are robust buildings which have survived alteration, redevelopment and new neighbours over the years and so could survive what they propose, but we believe that is not the case. They are nearing the tipping point where their value will disappear and be subsumed in the extra height and mass of the new building proposed.

We believe that the new dormer windows proposed by the appellants for 10c would substantially alter the canal frontage as locally listed in 1979. Taken more broadly, and with relevance to the wider integrity of the local list, on a typical locally listed terrace close by in Hemingford Road for example you would have trouble getting permission to alter the dormer windows on your house in such a substantial way. The same should apply here. I don't think it matters if the existing dormers were inserted after the original building was erected. They are as listed in 1979 and that is what is important here. If the developers are allowed these dormers here, the rules will be hard to maintain elsewhere.

The same applies to the Thorley offices on All Saints Street. We think the development behind and above will diminish and overwhelm the existing building. It is a fine late Victorian Baroque building, in some ways the most distinguished of the whole complex and should survive without alteration.

On the subject of the Islington locally listed buildings, we believe they are a resource for the people of Islington as a whole, not just a guide for planners and developers. And there are a lot of them,

over 1600 entries and a total of many more buildings. The canal frontages of 12 and 10c and the All Saints Street frontage are splendid examples of those buildings at their finest. We believe they should be left as they are.