
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2016

by Rachel Walmsley BSc MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/16/3156768

4 Althorp House, Althorp Road, Wandsworth, London SW17 7ED

- 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 Simon Williams against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/1727, dated 24 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is low level rendered wall to front garden with glazed panels above, and glazed entrance gates with metal columns and fixings. Render to match building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The appeal site has planning permission for a front garden wall¹. It was evident from my observations on site that a boundary wall had been partly constructed though not in accordance with the permission mentioned but in relation to the development which is the subject of this appeal. I have therefore based my decision on what I saw on site, together with the submitted plans and details.
3. Subsequent to the Council's decision on the planning application, the appellant has submitted drawing 634/A3/585 Rev B to show the appeal scheme alongside the development approved at the neighbouring site (the Althorp Public House). The drawing proposes no changes to the development proposed but nevertheless, the Council have commented on this drawing. To accept it therefore, would not prejudice the interests of parties. For this reason I have accepted the drawing and determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of Wandsworth Common Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 states that *special consideration should be paid to the desirability of preserving*

¹ Planning application ref 2014/6340.

or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. This is supported by policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Local Plan² which seek development that is well designed, uses appropriate materials and has *consideration for the conservation of features and elements that contribute to the heritage asset's significance and character.*

6. The appeal site is within a predominantly residential area within the St James' sub-area of the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area (CA), as identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal³. Althorp Road includes a number of mid Victorian buildings that have retained many of their original architectural features. It was apparent from my observations on site that that front boundaries to properties were a defining feature of the street; walls and cast iron railings in particular were a significant part of the character of the street and of the character and appearance of the CA. Indeed, it was apparent that the residential property to one side of the appeal site had a brick wall and pillars and cast iron railings. To the other side of the appeal site was a brick boundary wall and railings, marginally taller than the wall and railings to the other side.
7. The appeal site includes a property that is different in age and character to other properties within the street. It is also the first of a small number of buildings on the same side of Althorp Road as the appeal site which are commercial in use and differ in form and character from surrounding residential properties.
8. The proposed wall would be rendered and the glass panels textured and supported by metal columns. These materials would contrast with the brick and cast iron prevalent within the street. Also, given the impermeable nature of the glazed panels compared with railings, the proposal would be overly dominant within local views, out of keeping with the more subtle forms of boundary treatments within the area. Whilst the appeal site marks a change in character within the street, the front boundary treatments in brick and cast iron are a common feature which contribute importantly to the character and appearance of the CA overall. The materials proposed would detract from this, creating an incongruous boundary within the street.
9. It is suggested that the appeal proposal might have been designed differently had the proposals at the Public House adjoining the site been known. However, the revised plan⁴ before me has not been amended to reflect this and therefore this does not carry any weight in my decision.
10. The appellant cites a number of examples within the local area where glass panels have been constructed on front boundaries. With the exception of the development at the northern end of Wiseton Road and to a food store, the glass panels were granted under different planning policies or constituted permitted development which did not require the permission of the Council. The glazing to the food store is transparent and an integral part of the architectural form of the building and therefore performs a different role to a boundary wall to the back of a pavement. Notwithstanding these observations,

² Wandsworth Local Plan, Development Management Policies Document (adopted March 2016)

³ Wandsworth Conservation and Design: Wandsworth Common Conservation Area Appraisal

⁴ Drawing 634/A3/585 Rev B

the area surrounding each of the sites identified is different to the appeal site and therefore, however subtle, these differences make true comparisons inequitable.

11. In all, therefore, I find that the materials proposed would result in the boundary wall appearing incongruous within the street, resulting in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA. Paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that where a development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a CA, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
12. The proposal would delineate the street from the private property, improve safety, security and privacy to the latter, and help screen refuse storage to the front of the site. Furthermore, the effort made to design a proposal that would be in-keeping with the modern character of the host property is welcomed. However, it has not been demonstrated that the form of boundary treatment proposed is the only possible means of realising these benefits. Consequently I give limited weight to these benefits. I also find little connection between the boundary wall and the hardstanding behind, and with the threshold step at the building's main entrance to give weight to these matters in favour of the appeal. In all, therefore, the limited weight to the benefits identified would not be sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the CA. In accordance with the clear expectations of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Accordingly it would be contrary to policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 132 and 134 of the Framework.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the proposal would be contrary to the development plan and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

R Walmsley

Inspector