



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2020

by David Fitzsimon MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th October 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/D/20/3250747

7 Coulter Road, London W6 0BJ

- 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 Miss Silvia Calvo Alcala against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2020/00289/FUL, dated 31 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is 'the erection of a bike shed in the front garden'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Coulter Road street scene and the Bradmore Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a traditional mid-terrace property which sits within a section of Coulter Road which is home to similar dwellings. The well ordered frontages of the dwellings within this part of the street scene make a positive contribution to its character and appearance along with that of the Bradmore Conservation Area (CA).
 4. The proposal seeks to introduce a bike storage container within the small front garden of the appeal property. The submitted plans indicate that the storage container would be 1.96m wide by 0.89m deep and 1.33m tall. The container would be constructed in aluminium with a cream/white finish and it would sit along the boundary with No. 9 Coulter Road.
 5. The shallow front garden of the appeal property is enclosed by a low boundary wall with arches as a feature. As a result, the proposed store would be readily visible from the highway, where it would be seen as a utilitarian structure, sitting awkwardly against the front bay window. To my mind, the store would appear as an incongruous feature which would detract from the frontage of the appeal property, the well ordered character and appearance of the street scene and the CA.
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6. The harm to the CA as a heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' as directed by the Planning Practice Guidance. However, I attach considerable importance and weight to the statutory duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework explains that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It goes on to say that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Other considerations including public benefits

8. I am mindful that bike stores have been introduced to the shallow front gardens of other properties within the local area. Whilst the appellant points to the fact that several of the examples highlighted benefit from planning permission, I do not know the precise planning background and circumstances behind them all. In any event, I have considered the proposal before me against the particular street scene and context within which it would sit.
9. I appreciate that the proposal would provide secure bicycle storage and I note the appellant's assertion that there is currently no space within the Council's storage hangars. However, no compelling evidence has been advanced to persuade me that the proposal would be the one and only storage solution. I am also mindful that cycling is to be positively encouraged as a sustainable method of travel and the proposal clearly offers some public benefit in this regard. Nevertheless, this benefit, along with the other considerations referred to above, does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the street scene and the Conservation Area that I have identified.
10. In reaching my decision, I have considered whether the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions could overcome the visual harm. This would be reduced significantly if the store was screened by a tall hedge, such as the hedge which sits at the front of the neighbouring dwelling, No. 5 Coulter Road. However, I take the view that the planting of a mature hedge would not be proportionate to the scale of the development proposed and therefore would not be a reasonable requirement.

Overall Conclusion

11. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the street scene and the CA, contrary to policies DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the adopted Hammersmith & Fulham Local Plan, which collectively promote good design that respects and enhances its townscape context and heritage assets. The arguments advanced by the appellant do not outweigh this harm and policy conflict, therefore the appeal does not succeed.

David Fitzsimon

INSPECTOR