
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2021

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/W/20/3263760

Ground Floor Flat, 71 Overstone Road, London W6 0AD

- 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 Thomas Peters against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2020/02120/FUL, dated 2 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 October 2020.
 - The development is erection of a secure bike shed in the front garden of the property. Constructed from metal, painted to blend in with surrounding walls etc. Dimensions 190cm x 90cm x 120cm.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The bike shed was in situ at the time of my visit. I have determined the appeal on the basis that permission is being sought retrospectively for its erection.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Bradmore Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The Bradmore Conservation Area covers an area of traditional housing to the north of Hammersmith town centre. Overstone Road contains mid-Victorian terraced housing, most of which is largely intact and unaltered externally. The buildings are set back from the road behind small front gardens and these spaces are an important element of the character of the street. A mix of low walls and railings define the edge of the public realm. The walling to the front of 71 Overstone Road is not original, but its height is consistent with other boundary treatments on this side of the road.
5. The bike shed is positioned at the front of No 71, partly overlapping its ground floor bay window. It comprises a metal box with a lockable door at one end. The box is a bulky structure when viewed in the context of this small garden. It projects above the top of the boundary wall and draws the eye away from the attractive housing in the street. The coloration is muted, but the metal construction has a utilitarian appearance which is at odds with the pleasing architecture which surrounds it. For these reasons I consider the development to be visually incongruous and detrimental to the street scene.

6. The appellant cites cases where the Council has approved storage sheds in conservation areas. However, none are directly comparable to the current appeal. Although visible through railings, the shed permitted at 39 Overstone Road would replace an existing bin cupboard and it would be lower, less bulky and constructed in more appropriate materials. The structure approved at 28 Lilyville Road is also smaller, but its positioning against a side boundary wall makes it more discreet. The store at 63 Chiddingstone Street backs onto a taller wall and is constructed in matching brick which assimilates the structure into the street scene. The bike shed at 58 Sedgeford Road is of similar size to the appellant's but the garden is larger and the visual impact is mitigated by existing fencing and planting within front gardens.
7. I have been provided with a list of other bike sheds within conservation areas. There is no record of planning permission having been granted for these and I have no means of knowing whether they are the subject of any enforcement proceedings. In any event, the designs in most cases are different and some of the streets have more greenery to reduce the prominence of structures within front gardens. It is an established principle that applications should be treated on their merits and that is the basis on which I have determined the appeal.
8. Local and national planning policy are strongly supportive of cycling as a means of improving health and wellbeing and reducing traffic congestion and pollution. Consequently, the benefits of secure cycle storage weigh in favour of the appellant's case. I have taken account of the fact that the co-owner of the appeal property is an NHS key worker and that Government advice was not to use public transport during the pandemic. However, applying my s72 duty¹, any harm to the conservation area must be afforded considerable importance and weight. In the overall balance the harm to the conservation area outweighs the benefits, both public and private.
9. I conclude that the bike shed fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bradmore Conservation Area. There is conflict with Policies DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (2018) insofar as these seek to create a high quality urban environment that respects and enhances its townscape context and heritage assets. There are no material considerations to indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR

¹ Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990