

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2021

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 October 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/21/3278197

34 Briar Road, Harrow, HA3 0DR

- 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 Raja Chandnani against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 21/0575, dated 18 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front infill porch extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed development would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling, with half-timbered features and a double height bay window and overhang gable on brackets – features mirrored by the dwelling’s attached neighbour, Number 32 Briar Road.
 4. The appeal property is located within a residential area and is situated within the Northwick Circle Conservation Area, a planned residential estate built between 1924-1937 and characterised by the presence of a variety of largely two storey, predominantly detached and semi-detached dwellings. Retained original features, particularly half-timbering, tiled roofs, gables, bays and period detailing make a significant contribution to a strong sense of uniformity and to Northwick Circle Conservation Area’s distinctive sense of place.
 5. Houses tend to be set back from the road behind parking areas and/or gardens and have long gardens to the rear. This and the presence of grass verges, gardens and street trees provides for rhythm and regularity, and a sense of greenery and spaciousness.
 6. The appeal property’s half-timbered, bay and gabled features make a positive contribution to the Northwick Circle Conservation Area, as does its distinctive and carefully detailed porch, with its overhanging tile roof, supporting pillar and
-

doorway with windows to either side of the door. Further, the appeal property's attractive porch is mirrored by that of No 32 and in doing so, makes an important contribution to the visual balance of the adjoining dwellings.

7. During my site visit, I observed that, whilst the appearance of Number 32 and 34's garages and areas above them differ, the central areas of the two dwellings are so similar as to provide for a pleasing sense of symmetry, in keeping with the qualities of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area.
8. The proposed development would infill the original porch in an unsympathetic manner, such that important architectural detailing would be lost. This would be to the detriment of the overall appearance of the appeal property and further, the proposed infill porch would significantly unbalance the symmetrical qualities of the two adjoining dwellings, to the harm of the identified attributes of Northwick Circle Conservation Area.
9. Whilst I also noted during my site visit that other nearby properties have had their front porches infilled and/or extended, I consider the porches of the appeal property and its adjoining neighbour to be distinctive to these two dwellings and that the appeal property's porch makes a positive contribution to the Northwick Circle Conservation Area.
10. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development would fail to conserve or enhance the appearance of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area. Having regard to paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and to Planning Practice Guidance, I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be less than substantial. This needs to be balanced against any public benefits the development may bring.
11. In this respect, there is no substantial evidence to demonstrate that there are any benefits that would amount to such public benefits that they would outweigh the harm identified.
12. Consequently, I find that the proposal would fail to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area, contrary to the Framework; to Brent Development Management Policies Plan (2016) Policies DMP1 and DMP7; and to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: SPD2 Residential Extensions and Alterations (2018), which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

13. In support of his case, the appellant refers to other developments in the vicinity. However, I have found that the proposed development would fail to conserve the appearance of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area and this is not a factor that is mitigated by the presence of other developments elsewhere.
14. I note that the Council's decision notice refers to the Northwick Park Conservation Area and that the Council's officer's report refers to the Northwick Circle Conservation Area. The relevant character appraisal refers to the Northwick Circle Conservation Area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR