



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 August 2021 by Max Webb BA (Hons)

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/21/3273251

10 Colinette Road, London SW15 6QQ

- 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 Holly Clothier against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2020/2092, dated 28 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2021.
 - The development is erection of sliding gates to front driveway.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. I saw on site that the gates had been installed in accordance with the submitted plans and have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the development has already taken place.
4. Since the Council's decision, an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, there have been no substantial changes to the Framework, besides paragraph numbers. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
5. The appeal has been made under the Householder Appeals Service procedure, whereby the Council's case would usually be made through its officer report and not an appeal statement. However, in this case the Council has submitted an 'appeal response' dealing with some of the appellant's examples of other gates in the area. Although not usual practice, as it specifically relates to matters in the appellant's Grounds of Appeal and the appellant has been given the opportunity to respond, I do not consider that any party would be prejudiced by my accepting this additional document.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the host dwelling, surrounding area and the West Putney Conservation Area (WPCA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. The WPCA derives its significance from the Victorian and Edwardian buildings and suburbs and the high-quality architecture and consistency of those areas. Properties in Colinette Road are generally large, detached villas in generous plots and of the same original design and pattern. The relatively uniform panelled brick walls along front boundaries and the visible driveways of Colinette Road are identified in the West Putney Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2010) (CAA) as part of the key character of this road. The CAA also suggests that gates were never intended for this street. Although extended, the appeal property still retains much of the original form of the villa when viewed from the road, with only a small area of a contemporary extension visible. Its spacious frontage and boundary walls are also highly characteristic of this road. Consequently, prior to the installation of the front gates, the appeal site made a positive contribution to the WPCA.
8. The gates are constructed from coated aluminium coloured anthracite grey and, although slatted, the gaps between the slats are small, giving the gates a relatively solid appearance and restricting views into the driveway. Despite appearing to be a high-quality product and matching the dark appearance of the garage door, by introducing the relatively solid design and a darker colour to the boundary, the gates disrupt and harmfully contrast with the appearance of the lighter coloured panelled brick wall. The contemporary design of the gates is also distinctly at odds with the traditional form of the front wall and the front elevation of the villa.
9. The gates are modest in height and appear relatively hidden when open, however as they are in place to increase security, it is likely they will often be closed. When closed they provide an unsympathetic obstruction to the openness of the front driveway, diminishing the ability to appreciate its original form and creating an increased sense of enclosure uncharacteristic of this road.
10. For these reasons, the gates harm the character and appearance of the appeal site and detract from the front boundary treatments which make an important contribution to the significance of the WPCA. The front driveway area and gates are only perceivable in the public realm for a short distance in either direction, so the harm is limited to a relatively small area. Nevertheless, they do not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the WPCA.
11. There are a small number of other gates present on Colinette Road, however these are black railing style gates that better suit the traditional appearance of the host properties. They are also visually permeable, maintaining the ability to appreciate the driveways which characterise this road and creating less of a sense of enclosure than the appeal site.
12. My attention has also been drawn to a number of other examples of gates within the WPCA, however they are on other streets with very different characters, which do not derive significance from open front driveways and uniform boundary walls to the same extent as Colinette Road. Some examples

are in the style of railings which allow views through them, while most of the more solid forms match the adjacent boundary treatments, and others replaced original gates. Consequently, none of these examples are seen in the same context as the appeal scheme, nor do they result in the same impact on the character or appearance of the WPCA. They are therefore materially different to the appeal scheme and their presence does not justify the harm identified.

13. As the development only affects a small part of the WPCA, the development results in less than substantial harm to its significance in terms of the Framework. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development. The gates may provide additional security for the property, however this is a private benefit rather than a public benefit and consequently does not outweigh the harm to the significance of the WPCA.
14. The appellant suggests gates 30 centimetres lower could be installed as permitted development. Whilst this may only be a modest change in height, it would make a considerable difference by allowing greater views of the front driveway area and reduce the disruptive effect of the gates. Therefore, that option would be less harmful than the scheme before me, and does not justify the harm identified.
15. Overall, the gates do not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host dwelling, surrounding area or the WPCA. They therefore conflict with Policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (2016), which together aim to ensure development contributes positively to local character, with particular regard to conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and with the Framework.
16. Although not in the Council's refusal reason, the appellant has referred me to Policy IS3 of the Core Strategy (2016) and Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), which also form part of the Development Plan. Collectively, these also seek to protect and respond to character and heritage and conserve significance and therefore, given my findings above, do not weigh in favour of the appeal scheme.
17. When closed the gates create a safe, enclosed space at the front of the property for younger inhabitants. However, there is no substantive evidence before me of any safety issues before they were installed, or of any personal circumstances that result in a need for greater security, such that the absence of gates would cause undue harm. Nor has it been demonstrated that this could not be achieved with a more sympathetic design. Therefore, the security benefits do not outweigh the conflict with the Development Plan in this case.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. For the reasons given above and having had regard to the Development Plan when it is considered as a whole, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR