

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 24 November 2021

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/W/21/3278597

124 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6 2UL

- 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 Mrs Gauri Nafrey of Bridge Baker against the decision of London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2020/03207/FUL, dated 3 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "to erect a fret cut screen prompted by Covid to run perpendicular from shop front at the South boundary to provide protection from public walking through and keeping fore court clear for customers and although see through provide a degree of protection."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the retention of fret cut screening to south boundary of the front forecourt at 124 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6 2UL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2020/03207/FUL, dated 3 December 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Notwithstanding the time limits given to implement planning permission as prescribed by Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), this permission in so far as it relates to the development (being granted under section 73A of the Act in respect of development already carried out) shall have effect from the date on which the development was carried out.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted is as set out within the following approved plans: G1-01-00; Elevations front & side; and Plan layout.

Preliminary Matters

2. The name of the appellant company on the application form differs from that on the appeal form, but the named individual is the same on both and two companies fall within the same ownership. The name of the company I saw on site reflects that stated on the appeal form, so I have used these details above.
3. The fret cut screening in situ is in accordance with the submitted plans/details. I have considered the appeal on this basis, but I have adopted the description of development found on the decision notice in my formal decision as it removes superfluous statements about the merits and reasons for the appeal scheme and better reflects the development before me.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Studdridge Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property lies in the south-eastern corner of the Conservation Area which has a strong street pattern and building line. The property is at the end of a Victorian three-storey red brick terrace that contains a variety of commercial uses at ground floor with residential above. Properties within the terrace have a regular rhythm and appearance. The terrace and properties on the opposite side of Wandsworth Bridge Road contribute to a busy commercial area which forms part of a Key Local Shopping Centre. Street trees can be found in the pavement to Wandsworth Bridge Road and properties within the terrace use the forecourts for the sale of goods or for external seating.
6. There is a mixture of boundary treatments in the Conservation Area, but they are typically low brick walls and/or railings. However, this is not an overriding characteristic of the commercial properties on Wandsworth Bridge Road with many properties not having any boundary treatment. Where there are, they have a varied form, style and appearance and extend across and in front of the commercial premises. They do, however, share a common characteristic of enclosing the space in front of each premise. While the Council considers that they should not form a precedent and may refer these to the enforcement team for investigation, some seem to have been there for a good period.
7. In any event, the screen stands forward of the appeal property between Nos 124 and 126 next to an external seating area. The design of the screen provides interest and whilst it does obscure part of the shop fronts to Nos 124 and 126 it is not solid and does allow some views through or over the fence. Views of properties are inhibited from either direction by the siting and layout of properties, the presence of street trees and the busy nature of the street. In this context, the proposal is not intrusive or oppressive as its scale, siting and design does not unduly affect the appreciation of the shop fronts or the rhythm of the existing forecourts. The proposal has not created visual clutter and it therefore respects the retail character and public realm setting of Wandsworth Bridge Road; and preserves the special character of the Conservation Area.
8. I conclude that the proposal accords with Policies DC1, DC4, DC5 and DC8 of the Hammersmith & Fulham Local Plan and Key Principles CAG2, CAG3, CAG4 and SD1 of the Planning Guidance Supplementary Guidance Document. Jointly these seek, among other things, high quality development that is compatible with the scale, design and character of existing development, neighbouring properties and their setting so that it preserves or enhances the townscape context and heritage assets.

Conditions

9. I have imposed an approved plans condition and a condition clarifying when the planning permission for the development took effect from. Both are necessary in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion

10. The appeal scheme would accord with the Development Plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR