



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2022

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3297567
54 Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JS

- 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 and Mrs. Martin and Katherine Verdon-Roe against the decision of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref: 21/4258/HOT, dated 13 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the front boundary wall and removal of pedestrian gate to create a vehicle crossover to facilitate forecourt parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's decision notice refers to the St Matthias Conservation Area Statement, however from the supporting documents it is clear this is an error, and the site lies within the Castelnau Conservation Area.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the Conservation Area and the setting of Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Reasons

4. Lonsdale Road is a wide tree lined residential street which forms part of the Castelnau Conservation Area (CCA). The villa properties are set back from the road and whilst there is some variation the front boundaries are generally formed of low walls with hedging above, and notably tall white pillars are sited to either side of the vehicular or pedestrian access points. In my view, the front boundary treatment is an important feature of the street scene and contributes to the character of the CCA.
5. The appellant's analysis of the front boundaries along Lonsdale Road demonstrates that the majority have a vehicular access and forecourt parking. However, in contrast to the prevailing form, the proposal would create a completely open frontage leaving only the pillars to either side of the plot. Whilst no.54 is a semi-detached property and has a more limited plot width than other properties along the street, the full width is not required to accommodate a driveway.

6. The open frontages referred to by the appellant (No.31a and land between Nos.76 & 78) relate to the width of the access, and maintaining some enclosure was a key factor in the appeal decision for a vehicular access to No.68¹, referenced by the appellant, which was allowed but subject to the provision of gates and railings. As such, I do not find the appeal proposal would be directly comparable to other access arrangements along Lonsdale Road which help to define the frontage of Buildings of Townscape Merit and screen forecourt parking. The existing low brick wall is not in itself a positive feature, but the loss of the pillar and the wide, open gap created would be visibly at odds with the character of the area.
7. In conclusion, I find that the development would be harmful to the visual appearance of Lonsdale Road, which contributes to the significance of the CCA. The level of harm to the CCA would be less than substantial, and therefore in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) this is to be weighed against public benefits. The proposal would create an off-street parking space, but this would be achieved through the removal an on-street space, and there are no identified benefits which would outweigh with the great weight, as defined by paragraph 202 of the Framework, given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
8. Thus, the development would fail to accord with Local Plan² policies LP1, LP2 and LP4 which seek that development is of a high-quality design, compatible with the local character, respects relationships to the public realm, conserves and where possible makes a positive contribution to the historic environment and preserves the character and setting of Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Other Matters

9. I am aware that this proposal follows an earlier refused scheme and that the Council has raised no highway objection to the proposal. Additionally, as part of the appeal the appellant has provided a further plan showing new landscaping within the site. However, these factors would not change the open nature of the site frontage and would not mitigate the harm I have found.

Conclusion

10. For the reason set out and having regard to all other matters raised I dismiss the appeal.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/L5810/C/3145386

² London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames – Local Plan adopted 3 July 2018