



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2022

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/22/3303427

11 Westover Road, London SW18 2RE

- 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 & Mrs Marshall against the decision of London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref: 2021/5159 dated 10 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is for alterations including removal of part front wall and formation of hardstanding in front garden. Erection of bike storage shed (1.5m in height x 1m in width x 2m in length) and an electric vehicle charging point.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The description of development is taken from the decision notice and appeal form. In my view this more clearly and concisely describes the development and I have used it for my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including the Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Westover Road is a tree lined residential street with the properties set back from the road. No.11 is part of a group of three pairs of semi-detached Edwardian properties of the same design with a bay window and a semi-circular window to the gabled roof. The front gardens are bound by a low-level wall with taller piers demarking the pedestrian entrances. These properties (Nos.11-21) are subject to an Article 4 Direction covering the front boundaries, and also lie within the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area (WCCA).
5. The WCCA covers a large area of Victoria/Edwardian properties around the common. Its significance is derived from the grid pattern of the streets and the appearance of the properties. Along Westover Road the front gardens and boundary walls create a homogenous and formal appearance which is softened by the street trees and garden planting, and which together contribute to the character of the area.

6. The Council explain that the Article 4 Direction was applied to areas with concentrations of intact original front boundary treatments, and the WCCA Appraisal indicates that the formation of hardstanding to front gardens is considered to be visually harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.
7. The proposal would remove the section of wall directly in front of the bay window to allow the garden area to be used for parking. While the pedestrian entrance and its piers would be retained, the break in the boundary and the positioning of a new pier to the other side of the driveway, centrally between the pair of semi-detached properties, would disrupt the form and rhythm of the boundary. Part of the contribution the boundary treatment makes to the area is derived from the regularity and continuous length. Except for No.21, which has a driveway to the side, the properties to the eastern side of Westover Road from the appeal property up to the edge of the Conservation Area (odd Nos.11 to 67) exhibit front gardens and parking is on street.
8. I acknowledge that some driveways have been introduced along Westover Road, however these primarily serve detached properties which have a different spatial and visual relationship with the street and the neighbouring properties. The visual and architectural unity of No. 11 with its neighbours positively contributes to the Westover Road streetscene and in views along Crieff Road as part of the vista at the end of that road. In my view, while the proposed alterations have been carefully considered to minimise their impact, the introduction of off-street parking would be visually intrusive, and the changes to the boundary would be to the detriment of the historic character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.
9. In the context of the WCCA as a whole the harm would be less than substantial. The proposal would aid electric car charging, and there would be other conveniences for the occupiers from off road parking. Nonetheless, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework great weight is to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and there are no identified public benefits which would outweigh this harm.
10. Overall, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the WCCA and would have an adverse impact on the character of the area contrary to policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan - Development Management Policies Document (2016) which amongst other things seek development which is well designed, not visually intrusive, and positively contributes to the character. Additionally conserves and, where appropriate, enhances the significance, appearance, character and setting of heritage assets.

Other Matters

11. On-street parking bays form a continuous and defined parking arrangement along Westover Road. There is no specific evidence before me of any safety issues associated with the existing parking and as such this is not a matter to which I have given weight. Replacement tree planting and ensuring appropriate materials could be secured through conditions, although this and the support from third parties does not alter my findings and the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR