



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2022

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/22/3298332

56 Barnes High Street, Barnes, London SW13 9LF

- 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 Kathryn Hounscome against the decision of Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/3814/FUL, dated 29 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as, 'change of use from Class A1 to Class A3. Minor alterations to exterior façade including installation of new timber bifold doors to entrance, on Barnes High Street and bifold doors to existing timber courtyard on Foundry Mews. New Installation of Signage to front fascia and installation of hanging sign in existing location. Light demolition of internal partitions walls'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed shopfront on the front elevation on the existing Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) and the character or appearance of the Barnes Green Conservation Area (BGCA).

Reasons

4. The existing building is a BTM and therefore a non-designated heritage asset. The building is part of a terrace of properties which line the north side of Barnes High Street. While the existing shopfront was installed in 2014, given its timber construction, stall riser and large glazed element, it nevertheless is in keeping with the other traditional shopfronts in the terrace and wider area. As such the significance of the existing building insofar as it relates to this appeal, lies in the traditional character of its shopfronts.
5. The site lies within BGCA. I note the Barnes Green Conservation Area 1 statement, which states that Barnes High Street is relatively undistinguished architecturally, with a mixture of traditional and modern building types; its character stems from the variety of uses. However, as I observed during my site visit, the street has mostly shopfronts at ground floor, many of which have a traditional character with moulded stallrisers, timber construction and large

glazed windows. As such, the significance of the BGCA, insofar as it relates to the appeal, lies in the traditional character of the shopfronts. The existing shopfront, given its traditional elements including stall riser and large glazing, appears in keeping with the character of BGCA and contributes positively to its significance.

6. The proposed shopfront would consist of bi-fold doors that would include timber panels at the bottom. However, given their separate parts, they would not together appear as a continuous stall riser and would therefore adversely affect the historic character of the existing shopfront. Moreover, the frames of the individual doors would have a width that would appear wider than traditional shopfront glazing mullions and would therefore erode the traditional character of the existing building. As such, the proposed bi-fold doors would appear incongruous when viewed against the rest of the terrace and wider conservation area.
7. I note the use of bi-fold doors on a shopfront near the appeal site. However, given its narrow glazing, wide door frames and lack of continuous stallriser, that shopfront is not in keeping with the traditional character of other shopfronts in the vicinity. As such, it has not altered my findings with respect to the effect of the proposal on the significance of BRCA.
8. The proposal would also therefore conflict with the Supplementary Planning Document Shopfronts Adopted March 2010 which seeks, among other things, to raise the quality of shopfront design.
9. Although the proposal seeks to echo a design that was in place before the current shopfront, that scheme has nevertheless been removed and I have necessarily assessed the scheme on the basis of the existing building.
10. Consequently, the proposed development would harm the character of the BTM and would harmfully erode the character and appearance of BGCA. It would therefore result in harm to the significance of both the BTM and BGCA.
11. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the limited scale of the proposal, the harm would be less than substantial but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
12. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings.
13. In addition, paragraph 203 requires that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
14. The Appellant considers that the proposal would be beneficial because it would aid air flow into the café and aims to draw customers into the independent shop in order to compete with larger chain cafes nearby. I also note the section of the Framework which relates to ensuring the vitality of town centres. However, there is little substantial evidence before me to indicate that the proposal would achieve these aims. As such I attribute limited weight to the public benefits as set out by the Appellant.

15. While I note the evidence regarding cracked paintwork and chipped timber, there is little evidence to indicate that the existing shopfront could not be repaired. In any event, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a retail unit is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing retail use that would not cease in its absence.
16. Given the above, the public benefits in this instance do not outweigh the great weight attached to the harm to the character and appearance and significance of the BGCA. The benefits would also not outweigh the harm to the significance of the BTM.
17. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 199 of the Framework and Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan Adopted July 2018 which require all development to be of high architectural and urban design quality and to conserve and enhance the significance of the Borough's conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets, including Buildings of Townscape Merit. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole and in the absence of any material considerations to indicate otherwise, the appeal is dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR