



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2023

by E Dade BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/22/3301470 277 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0AP

- 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 Katherine Green against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2022/0534, dated 6 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is, in collaboration with Warmer Homes London and their accredited installer, installation of 10 solar panels to 2 sections of roof, roof one-facing the road, and roof two, above the wisteria.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of 10 solar panels to two sections of roof at 277 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0AP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2022/0534, dated 6 April 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: *Solar Panels Application – Site Plan; Roof Layout Plan*.

Preliminary Matters

2. For clarity and conciseness, I have omitted superfluous wording not related to the nature of the development from the description of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and surrounding area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the significance of Wandsworth Common Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling situated within the Ellerton Road area of the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area (CA). The Wandsworth Common Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) indicates that the area's special appeal, and therefore to my mind its significance, arises from its mixture of late Victorian properties combined with properties clearly influenced by the Modern Movement. The appeal property falls within the latter category.

5. The appeal property is relatively large and has a distinctive appearance and style, notably from the building's form which includes a prominent front projection with hipped roof. In addition, the building's white window frames and grilles, and large bay window, contrast with its dark brick and tile and form a distinctive feature of the building's design.
6. There is a high degree of symmetry between the appeal property and the adjoining dwelling. The large front projections of the appeal property and attached dwelling together form a distinctive 'U' shape. This design is repeated at adjacent dwellings, creating a group of uniformly spaced dwellings which are of broadly cohesive appearance. Through its form and appearance, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the character of the CA.
7. The CA follows an irregular boundary, with the appeal site situated within a spur which protrudes from the CA's south-western edge. The CA boundary runs along the front and rear of the appeal site and adjacent dwellings, therefore much of the area surrounding the appeal site is outside the CA and not of historic interest. Notably, Burntwood Lane is a long, straight road with frequent, fast-moving traffic. Features such as pedestrian refuge islands, a cycle lane, parking bays, safety bollards, modern streetlighting, vehicle activated speed signs and other highway signage give Burntwood Lane a generally modern, urban appearance. A new housing development is under construction broadly opposite the appeal site. The area surrounding the appeal site therefore forms a juncture between the CA and modern urban environment. In that respect, the site and its immediate surroundings of Burntwood Lane within the CA, include both features of historic interest and modern features akin to the wider setting beyond. Consequently, the addition of solar panels, which I observed are already an established feature nearby, would not necessarily be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene in this particular location.
8. The proposed solar panels would be mounted on the front roof plane of the main part of the dwelling and on the front projection's side roof plane and would be visible from the street. However, when approaching the appeal site along Burntwood Lane, the large front projections of the appeal property and adjoining dwelling would partly conceal the panels from view, thereby reducing the prominence of the panels and limiting their visibility from public spaces.
9. Due to the symmetry within the group of dwellings, alterations could disrupt the cohesive appearance of the row of dwellings. However, in this particular location, notwithstanding the general harmony of facades, form and fenestration, there is a more varied roofscape. This includes examples of different alterations to roof-slopes including the presence of side dormers and the addition of roof-lights to nearby properties within the CA. Whilst roof-lights occupy a reduced area as compared to the proposed solar panels, I do not consider the proposal would provide any greater degree of visual intrusion. The roof-lights and side dormers that I observed on my site visit appear to have been readily assimilated into the appearance of the buildings and their presence as part of a varied roofscape do not disrupt the symmetry or cohesive appearance of the group of dwellings. Consequently, to my mind, the scale and siting of the solar panels as proposed would also be capable of assimilating appropriately within the varied roofscape close by and as such would not appear visually intrusive or dominant in this particular location within the CA.

10. It follows that as the proposal would involve no alterations to the form of the building and the visual effects of the proposal would be limited in this particular location, it would not amount to harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property or the collective group of adjacent dwellings. The proposal therefore complies with Policy DMS1 of Wandsworth's Development Management Policies Document (2016) (DMPD) which requires proposals to provide a high quality, sustainable design and layout that contributes positively to local spatial character.
11. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. As I have found that the proposal would not diminish the character and appearance of the appeal property or those surrounding in terms of the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the CA, it follows that in the absence of harm the proposed solar panels in this particular location would preserve the significance of the CA.
12. I conclude that the development would preserve the character, appearance, and significance of the Wandsworth Common CA. The proposal therefore accords with DMPD Policy DMS2 which supports proposals which sustain and conserve the significance, appearance, and character of heritage assets. In addition, the proposal complies with paras. 199, 200 and 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which together give great weight to the conservation of and avoidance of harm to heritage assets.

Other Matters

13. Whilst the proposal would be beneficial to the occupiers of the appeal property, the proposal would also support the collective responsibility to mitigate climate change through transitioning to low carbon technologies, as advocated by the Framework.
14. As I have found no harm arising from the development in this location as influenced by the siting of the solar panels and the particular circumstances of the property and surrounding roofscapes, I am satisfied that the proposal would not introduce an unwanted precedent for other development elsewhere in the CA. Any future applications submitted in the area, should necessarily be considered on their own merits by the local planning authority.

Conditions

15. In the interests of certainty, in addition to the standard time limit of the planning permission granted, I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan taken as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted, subject to the conditions previously set out in the formal decision.

E Dade

INSPECTOR