The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2024

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:26th April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/24/3337603
1 Old Park Mews, Hounslow TW5 0QD

- 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 Harmon Singh Kapoor against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The application, Ref. 01457/1/P5, dated 27 September 2023 was refused by notice dated 23 November 2023.
- The development proposed is the installation of automatic front gates to the house (retrospective application)

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the gates on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Old Park Mews.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that No. 1 Old Park Mews is located close to the junction with Church Road and a short distance after entering the cul-de-sac is the first house in a terrace of four on the left hand side. In common with other nearby houses on this side of the road, the terrace has a fairly modest front building line (the houses not being well set back from the pavement).

4. However, the enclosure of the frontage space by the black metal gates amounts to a significant change in the street scene as they are seen in the context of the dwarf brick wall and metal railings of the adjoining dwelling and the entirely open front lawn and paved areas of the other nearby houses on the outside of the bend.

5. The gates at No. 1 are perceived as 'heavy' and bulky structures that are incongruous in this setting of relatively small dwellings with only a limited set - back on modestly sized plots. This is especially so because of the open plan design of the street scene, not just for the above-mentioned houses on this side of the road but also for the extensive development of flats on the opposite side of Old Park Mews. And although the appellant refers to being able to 'see through' the gates, the gaps are far too small to have any meaningful impact on their appearance and the overall visual amenity of the frontage.

6. I acknowledge that adjacent entrance to No. 92 Upper Sutton Lane has a similar barrier but despite its proximity this does not read together with the buildings in Old Park Mews as part of the character and appearance of the street scene. I have also noted the appellant's concerns as to the security of the house and have sympathy with the unpleasant effects of the incident that has already occurred.

7. However, there is no reliable evidence to demonstrate that it is the gates that have prevented a re-occurrence or indeed provide an effective deterrent in the future. Furthermore, to accept this as a reason for granting permission would in fairness effectively commit the Council to allow all householders to erect similar deterrents, irrespective of their effect on the visual amenity of the surroundings.

8. The appeal also includes photographs of a number of other properties in the Borough with front gates of a similar size and degree of enclosure. However, each individual setting is different and there is no information as to the particular circumstances of their installation. For this reason my judgement in this case has to be made primarily on the effect of the gates on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Old Park Mews.

9. Having taken account of all that I have seen and read, I find that the gates are harmful to the character and appearance of both No. 1 and the Old Park Mews street scene in conflict with Policies CC1, CC2 & SC7 of the Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 and with Government policy in Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023.

10. For these reasons the appeal fails.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR