



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2024

by C Livingstone MA(SocSci) (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/23/3326847

Natsons, 53 Church Road, Barnes, London SW13 9HH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Natsons against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The development proposed is installation of a security shutter along the outside face of the recessed entrance door in a colour to match the existing shopfront, with open grille shutter to the area adjacent to the shop window and solid shutter adjacent to the base panelling of the existing shopfront.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The name of the applicant on the planning application form is not the same as the name of the appellant on the appeal form. The agent confirmed via-email on 2 November 2023 that the name of the appellant is 'Natsons'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the Barnes Green Conservation Area (CA) and the significance of the host building which is a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM).

Reasons

4. The application site is located in a primarily residential area, with local high streets including a mix of retail and commercial uses. The significance of the CA defined in part by the quality and diversity of the well preserved, traditional architecture. 53 Church Road (No.53) is part of a two-storey, red brick shopping parade with primarily retail uses on the ground floor and residential accommodation above.
5. The parade includes attractive features including painted timber stall risers and carved decorative stonework. As such, the appeal building is part of a well preserved example of a traditional shopping parade, which is also in a prominent position within the CA facing Barnes Green, a leafy public park. Furthermore, the quality of such architecture is a defining characteristic of the CA, and thus the locally listed building contributes positively to the significance of the CA as a whole. I consider that the appeal property is a non-designated heritage asset in the terms of the Framework.

6. The shopfront of No.53 is constructed from light grey painted timber and includes decorative moulding on the stall riser, and a recessed entrance door reflecting other shops within the parade. The proposal is for the installation of an external metal security shutter over the recessed door, which would include a mesh area to align with the shop window and a solid section in alignment with the solid lower shopfront. The use of the shutter would be limited by the opening hours of the shop, and it be painted light grey to reflect the existing shopfront, which would remain unaltered.
7. It is acknowledged that the appellant has given consideration to minimising the impact and prominence of the shutter, through its design, colour, size and position. However, modern external metal shutters are not a typical feature of a traditional shopfront and there is only a single example of another shop with an external metal shutter in the area. The Supplementary Planning Document Shopfronts, Adopted March 2010 (SPDS) states that shopfront security should not be allowed to compromise the visual appearance of buildings or the character of the wider street scene and advises that internal grilles should be utilised in conservation areas, BTMs and listed buildings. The proposed external shutter would read as a modern and incongruous element within the shopfront which would detract from its traditional appearance and the architectural quality of the building and the overall character of the parade.
8. The appellant has provided several examples of other external shutters including an example at 81 Church Road. However, there is no evidence before me to demonstrate that this shutter benefits from planning permission. Further, this unit is an isolated example of a property with an external security shutter within the group of buildings that the parade is part of and not considered to set a precedent for the installation of external security shutters in the area.
9. Photos have also been provided of examples of security shutters within the Upper North Conservation Area in Islington and in Budapest, Hungary. Without information relating to these shutters, I am unable to give significant weight to the issue of precedent.
10. As such, the proposal would harm the character, appearance and significance of the CA as a whole. Paragraph 208 of the Framework explains that where, as I find in this case, the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits. The use of the building as a newsagent is a benefit to the public and the appellant states that additional security measures are required to ensure that the business remains viable. The security shutter may also reduce incidents of crime in the area, and this would also have a public benefit.
11. The appellant has installed several security measures including CCTV, an alarm system, security fogging, toughened glass on the front door and an automatic police system. Despite this, based on the evidence before me, the business has been subject to three break-ins or attempted break-ins since June 2021, and there have been further similar incidents in the area. It is acknowledged that such incidents directly affecting No.53 would have financial implications for the appellant and I accept that they result in a degree of distress for them and their staff.
12. The submitted data is, however, not detailed enough to allow me to have confidence that crime is an increasing local trend and of the three examples

provided there was only a single incident where the perpetrator gained entry through the front door of No.53. Further, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the business would no longer be viable without the additional security provided by an external security shutter. I thus give moderate weight to the identified public benefits which would not be sufficient to outweigh the great weight I must attach to the harm I have identified to the designated heritage asset.

13. As detailed above 53 Church Road is a BTM, as such the installation of the security shutters would directly affect a non-designated heritage asset. The installation of a modern metal security shutter would have a negative impact on the shopfront and would detract from the traditional detailing of the building as a whole; resulting in a considerable degree of harm to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset.
14. For the reasons detailed above the proposed development would have a harmful effect on character or appearance of the CA and the significance of the host building which is a building of Townscape Merit. As such, it is contrary to Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan 2018 (LP). These policies are consistent with the NPPF and seek to maintain and enhance the high quality character and heritage of the borough, giving great weight to the conservation of heritage assets when considering the impact of a development on their significance. They also seek to preserve, and where possible enhance, the significance, character and setting of non-designated heritage assets.
15. The proposal is also contrary to the supporting supplementary guidance provided within the SPDS, which states that shopfront security should not be allowed to compromise the visual appearance of buildings of the character of the wider street scene.

Other Matters

16. The proposal would result in no adverse impacts to flood risk, would not harm access or residential amenity. The absence of harm in these respects are neutral factors in my assessment of the appeal.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

C Livingstone

INSPECTOR