



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2024

by G Rollings BA(Hons) MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/24/3337091

11-13 Station Parade, Kew, Richmond, TW9 3PT

- 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 Gail's Ltd against the decision of Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/2396/FUL.
 - The development is retrospective shopfront alterations to no. 13 Station Parade.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Kew Gardens Conservation Area and building of townscape merit.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within the Kew Gardens Conservation Area, within a parade of retail and commercial units. These differ in appearance along the length of the parade, although its upper floors are unified with a similar appearance.
4. A ground-floor shop unit occupies 11 and 13 Station Parade. The façade of No. 11 has a modern rendered appearance and is predominantly glazed, split between three large similarly sized openings stretching from ground or almost-ground to fascia levels. No. 13 has a stone façade inlaid with three smaller irregular openings and neo-classical features.
5. The parade retains some original building features along its length and these show significant retained detail and ornamentation. Together with the form of the buildings and their enclosure of the street, they make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area. Additionally, No. 13 is a building of townscape merit. The Council's *Buildings of Townscape Merit Supplementary Planning Document* (2015) (the Townscape SPD) recognises the contribution of these non-statutory heritage assets to the areas in which they are situated. Further Council advice¹ seeks to protect the appearance and character of these buildings and conservation areas and suggests that the loss of traditional architectural features due to unsympathetic alterations should be avoided.
6. The proposal incorporates the reinstatement of a wooden door in a front opening of No. 13. Presently the opening is served by a fixed glazed panel allowing light

¹ Kew Gardens (formerly Lichfield Road) Conservation Area 15 plan and notes (2007) and *Conservation Area Study: Kew Road No. 55, Kew Gardens No. 15 and Lawn Crescent No. 20* (2007).

into the seating area of the unit. The proposal seeks to locate the door behind a similar fixed glazed panel. Other minor façade alterations are also proposed.

7. The existing arrangement of the building was the subject of a previous appeal decision². In his consideration, the Inspector considered that the robust front elevation of No. 13 demonstrated a sense of status and security that reflected the building's former status as a bank, and that the installation of the existing glazing in the door opening in that instance diminished the appearance of the building and the appreciation of the former use.
8. I do not disagree with the previous Inspector that the appearance and former use of No. 13 contributes to its significance. The 'heavy' appearance of the frontage, which is noticeable in relation to neighbouring buildings, is a callback to its previous function of a bank. In the plans before me, the door of the largest opening in the frontage would be restored, but a significant area of glazing would remain. The appearance of glass is notably different to that of a solid door. Even if the door were to remain closed at all times, the opening would recognisably appear as glazing rather than a more visually robust surface, and although visibility of the door could be increased with adapted glazing, this would not mitigate its modern appearance that would remain at odds with the appearance of the rest of the façade of No. 13. This juxtaposition would also harm the appearance of the building and whilst I have acknowledged above that there is a range of styles within the parade, the inclusion of this incongruous feature would also harm the significance of both the non-designated and designated heritage assets.
9. The development would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The harm would be less than substantial, and in accordance with paragraph 208 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2023) I have considered the weight of the public benefits of the proposal, including the use of the building. Whilst the original appearance of the building would be partly retained and the building's ongoing use is viable, these considerations do not sufficiently outweigh the harm caused.
10. I therefore conclude that the development would have a harmful effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Kew Gardens Conservation Area and building of townscape merit. It would conflict with the Council's Local Plan (2018) Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4, which together require all development to be of a high design quality and for heritage assets to be preserved, conserved or enhanced, amongst other considerations.

Conclusion

11. The development would conflict with the development plan for the area and there are no material considerations to indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the plan.
12. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

G Rollings

INSPECTOR

² Appeal ref: APP/L5810/W/3309451; date of decision: 30 May 2023.