

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2024

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/W/24/3349073

43 The Ridings, Ealing, London W5 3BT

- 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 Samir Al-Khafaf & Haifa N Tawfiq against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application is Ref. 241646HH.
 - The development proposed is replacement vehicle hardstanding, dwarf boundary wall and additional planting.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Although stated to the contrary on the application form, the appeal seeks retrospective permission in part, as described in the appeal statement.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character or appearance of the Hanger Hill (Haymills) Estate Conservation Area ('the CA').

Reasons

4. The Council's objection is that by reason of its front plot design including the hardstanding, the development is visually intrusive in the immediate area and at odds with the architecture of the original dwelling. It is argued that the combined effect is one of harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
 5. The frontage to the property has been laid with pavements to almost the full extent of its width and depth except for two small planting beds adjacent to a rendered dwarf wall, one to the flank with No.41 and one in the middle of the front boundary separating the two access areas.
 6. The combined large scale and openness of the hardstanding is unremittingly bleak and austere, and out of keeping with most of the frontages of other properties in the CA. The eye is drawn to this surface treatment, all the more so because of the bright red/pink colour of the pavements, and to the white rendered wall, both harmfully inappropriate and serving only to compound the adverse visual impact of the hard surfacing itself. However, as regards the pavement colour, I acknowledge that over time this is likely to weather and darken and become less intrusive.
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7. I observed that the frontages to the adjacent properties of Nos. 41 and 45 are also hard surfaced with tarmac and pavements respectively and additionally that there other properties on the Haymills Estate that have been similarly altered to provide off-road parking. However, these are of insufficient number to change the character and appearance of the CA where the original brick walls and mature planting are important in complementing the C20th inter-war period design of the dwellings.
8. The appeal scheme includes alterations as shown on Drawing No. SC/23/228-202. These include closing the southern access and deepening the planting area as well as returning it along the boundary with No. 41. The stated intention is for this area to be planted with trees including two beech and one birch and one hawthorn. However, whilst this proposal would be an improvement on the existing situation, I do not consider it would be sufficient to avoid permanent harm to the character and appearance of the CA, in respect of which development proposals are lawfully required to at least preserve.
9. The planning statement submitted with the application includes an aerial photograph of the frontage before the recent works were carried out. This clearly shows substantial planting including trees along the frontage (other than the access on the north side) and also along the south boundary with No. 41. This mature planting is confirmed in Google Street View imagery dated June 2021.
10. Whilst most of the frontage was laid to tarmac, it is clear that there remained sufficient soft border area to the front and south boundaries for dense mature planting that at that time would have made an important positive contribution to the conservation area. In these circumstances the amount of parking space and its ease of use would have been secondary to the attractive appearance of the house and the road.
11. By comparison, the existing proposal in this appeal is more tokenistic than substantive and fails to preserve the character and appearance of the CA, contrary to both its Management Plan and to adopted policy, including Policies 7.4, 7B, and 7C of the Ealing Development Management DPD 2013. As such, the proposal would also cause 'less than substantial harm' to the CA as defined in paragraph 208 of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023. There are no public benefits that would outweigh the harm caused.
12. The appeal fails accordingly.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR