



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2025

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/24/3354492

53 Barnes High Street, Barnes, London SW13 9LF

- 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 Mr Frankel of Castelnau Investments Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application reference is 24/1991/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the relocation of an existing vehicular gate, new crossover and refurbishment of existing boundary wall.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. On 12 December 2024, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework 2024) was published with an amendment issued on 7 February 2025. The Framework 2024, as amended, does not raise any new matters that are determinative to the outcome of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey building that forms part of a parade of similar properties within the Barnes Green Conservation Area (CA). The CA derives its significance as a designated heritage asset primarily from the rich variety and architectural quality of the buildings and the vibrant mix of uses within it as well as the riverside setting and Barnes Green. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
5. The appeal property is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM). This designation signifies that No 53 has visual, architectural or historic merit even though it is not statutorily listed. To my mind, No 53 typifies the traditional style, detailing and proportions of properties within the CA. As such, No 53 makes a significant and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. The Council raises no objection to the proposal apart from the proposed gate that is to be inserted into a new opening within the brick wall that marks the boundary of the site to Melrose Road. From the submitted evidence, I have no reason to disagree with that finding. I shall, therefore, focus on the proposed gate.

7. This element of the appeal scheme would replace a pair of solid timber gates further along the same boundary wall. It would comprise a row of evenly spaced vertical rods and slide to one side to allow vehicles to access the rear courtyard of No 53 from the road. The gaps between the individual rods would allow some intervisibility between the rear of No 53 and the adjacent highway.
8. The proposal would introduce a new feature that would be conspicuous in the local street scene given its prominent position close to the road. It would draw the eye from along Melrose Road and St Annes Road as a relatively formal and sizeable metal barrier that would offer partly open views into the rear courtyard of No 53. The presence of the new gate would contrast markedly with the boundary features of other properties within the area to which the site belongs that are characterised by gates and doors that are typically of solid, timber construction. In that context, the proposal would be a discordant, obtrusive and an unsympathetic addition to the street scene and the local area. For these reasons, the appeal scheme would detract from the setting of No 53 and diminish its significance as a BTM. By reducing the contribution of the appeal property to the heritage value of the CA, the proposal would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
9. I saw that gates with railings are evident elsewhere within the CA including those cases to which the appellant has referred. I observed that some of these examples enclose alleyways or form part of the entrance to residential flats and so are not directly comparable with the proposal before me. None of the cases cited share the same street scene as the site and so their context differs. In any event, each development should be assessed on its own merits, which I have done.
10. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the local area. Accordingly, it is contrary to Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the Richmond upon Thames Local Plan, Policies 28, 29 and 30 of the Richmond Publication (Regulation 19) Local Plan and the guidance within the Supplementary Planning Documents *House Extensions and External Alterations* and *Buildings of Townscape Merit*. These policies and guidance promote high quality design and aim to ensure that development conserves, if not enhances, the historic environment. It is also at odds with the Framework 2024, which, like its predecessor, states that developments should be sympathetic to local character, safeguard heritage assets and add to the overall quality of the area.
11. The harm caused by the proposal would be localised and so the effect on the CA would be less than substantial. In those circumstances, the Framework 2024 states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits. There would be some safety benefits by reducing the need for vehicle manoeuvring and improved visibility for drivers entering and leaving the site. No other public benefits have been put forward and none would outweigh the harm that I have identified.
12. Overall, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations, including those of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR