



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2025

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/25/3366023
8 The Grange, Wimbledon, SW19 4PT

- 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 & Mrs P Mercieca against the decision of Council of the London Borough of Merton
 - The application Reference is 24/P3197.
 - The development proposed is the construction of garage with garden room and workshop.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a large and ornate detached three-storey single family dwelling house with a partial basement together with some detached outbuildings situated to the rear of the appeal site. It was seemingly constructed in 1899 and is a fine example of an attractive house; it is locally listed. The oblong shaped plot, whilst having depth which is around the local the norm, constitutes one of the largest within The Grange because of its width; the side garden lying to its north west. A fine range of local houses and gardens result in a locality of very pleasing established character and a most attractive ambiance. The proposal is as described above. It is planned to be around 2.6m high (eaves), 6.5m (ridge height), 9.7m wide and 12.6m deep
 4. The site lies within the West Wimbledon Conservation Area (WWCA). There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Policy HC1 of the London Plan (LP) and Policy D12.5 of the Merton Local Plan 2024-37/38 (MLP) enlarge and reflect this. MLP Policy D12.3 is also all relevant to the case. Amongst other matters it seeks to secure development which would be of a high design standard; appropriately responding to local distinctiveness, context and character, and displaying suitable proportions and siting.
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5. The heritage significance of the WWCA is primarily derived from the buildings and spaces within it; the architectural and historic interest of its built form and its open spaces, and the contribution which they make with regard to the development of the area and its character. Significance along The Grange is primarily derived from the character and appearance of the late 19th and early 20th Century built form, with architectural detailing and arrangement within the plots being notable. Mature gardens and trees abutting the street clearly also contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There is a marked quality and completeness of the original houses, and their settings.
6. The appeal property's side garden is of extraordinary size and to my mind, partly for this reason, it contributes very positively to the setting of the large locally listed building, the historic interest of the area and the visual attributes of the streetscene.
7. The appeal property was designed and built with this large open garden, and I consider that in heritage, character, and appearance terms it should continue to benefit from this setting. Notwithstanding the mathematical calculations over coverage or mass my sense is that this scheme would be over-sized. It can be seen from paragraph 3 above that this would be an edifice of appreciable massing and scale. Contrary to the Appellants I would not read this as an 'adjunct' to the house; it would lack suitable subservience.
8. The garden is part of the heritage of the house, but I consider that it is also very much a contributor to the wider heritage character within the locality, where generous side gardens are recognised as a defining phenomenon and not suited to any significant infill.
9. Finally, I also disagree with the Appellants' case that because it is a large wide plot it is necessarily capable of accommodating a sizeable building without undermining character or appearance of the streetscene. With a frontage which is not all evergreen, a scheme of the scale and positioned as planned, and a loss of openness, there would be impingement upon streetscene qualities with the appeal scheme.
10. In summary, the development would be excessive and incongruous in relation to this house and the character, appearance, and heritage qualities of the wider environs.
11. Given the foregoing I conclude that the change proposed would be contrary to the aims of Section 72(1) and would conflict with the development plan policies which I cite in paragraph 4 above. The appeal scheme would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host property or the wider area.

Other matters

12. I note and would concur with the Appellants' listing in the Written Statement (paras 7.2-7.4 & 7.6) of the varied 'matters of fact' which are not in contention with the Council. I would also agree with the Appellants that LP Policy D8 is not relevant to the case in hand; it would appear that the Council has referred to this policy in error.

13. I understand the Appellants' wish to provide improved garaging and ancillary space at the appeal property. I agree that removal of the existing range of outbuildings would be an aesthetically positive move; however, as may be deduced from above, I feel that the replacement accommodation needs further consideration. I can see that appreciable thought has been given to the detailing and materials for the appeal scheme; my primary concerns relate to scale and siting. I would give any newly created rearward vistas via the planned re-positioned entrance only very limited weight given marginality.
14. I have reviewed local development, including the two nearby planning permissions drawn to my attention (refs 20/P2882 and 23/P3264). However, I find that there is nothing directly comparable in nature to the scheme before me given form, location and scale and, in any event, I must assess this case on its own merits and my reasoning is set out above.
15. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants, but individually or cumulatively these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
16. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of the built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset however what public benefits there would be would not outweigh this harm. Furthermore, there are no other benefits, including to the Appellants, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal proposal would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR