



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2025

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3360049

Jewellers Apartments, 272 Friern Barnet Lane, London N20 0NH

- 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 Ofir Chen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application reference is 24/1618/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the application of a render finish to the external walls of the existing building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the application of a render finish to the external walls of the existing building at Jewellers Apartments, 272 Friern Barnet Lane, London N20 0NH in accordance with the terms of the application, reference 24/1618/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos A-10-0100 (Site Location Plan), A-90-0203 (Existing and Proposed North East Elevation), A-90-0200 (Existing and Proposed North West Elevation), A-09-0201 (Existing and Proposed South East Elevation), and A-09-0202 (Existing and Proposed South West Elevation).
 - 3) Notwithstanding condition 2, no development shall take place until full details of the proposed render finishes (including samples of colour and texture) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. The new Barnet Local Plan ("the BLP") was adopted on 4 March 2025. It replaced the 2012 version of that plan, the policies of which had been referred to on the decision notice issued by the Council. The Council's statement and the appellant's final comments were made in the light of the new local plan and its policies; I have determined the appeal with reference to the up-to-date development plan.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed render finish on the character and appearance of the area, including on the setting of adjacent non-designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. Jewellers Apartments is a two-storey building at the corner of Friern Barnet Lane and Sherwood Street, in a predominantly-residential area primarily characterised by terraced and semi-detached housing. The appeal property is not listed or within a conservation area, nor is it within the setting of any statutorily listed buildings. It is, however, bounded to the east and south by two locally-listed buildings which are non-designated heritage assets (“NDHAs”): Nos 266-270 Friern Barnet Lane, a terrace of two-storey cottages in dark brick with string courses in contrasting red brick and other contrasting brick patterning; and Nos 1-15 Sherwood Street, a two-storey terrace in yellow stock brick with red brick banding and ground floor window arches. The local list identifies the significance of both of these NDHAs as being derived from their architectural interest. I saw on my site visit that they are in a good state of maintenance and retain many original details; they are very positive features of the local area.
5. Before being converted to apartments, the appeal property was occupied by a printworks and a jewellery manufacturer. Its rather box-like appearance, along with its larger scale, contrasts with the more traditional housing around it, particularly the compact and relatively finely-detailed NDHAs on two sides.
6. The external elevations of the appeal property are mainly of red brick, although there are areas where alterations or repairs have been carried out in different coloured brick, and small parts where the brickwork has been painted. The single-storey south-west facing ground floor wall adjacent to No 2 Sherwood Street is of yellow stock brick, while the first floor on that side of the building is finished in cream-painted render. The first floor of the south-east facing elevation is mostly finished in unpainted render, though this does not extend to the front part of the building. There are two rendered bands running round the north-west and north-east facing frontages facing Sherwood Street and Friern Barnet Lane, the lower of which (between the ground and first floors) has been painted white.
7. The proposed development is the application of a render finish to the external walls. The submitted drawings indicate that most of the exposed brickwork would be given a rough render finished in a terracotta red colour¹, while the existing render bands would be given a coat of smooth white render².
8. The repairs and alterations which have been carried out to the appeal property means that its elevations currently have something of a patchwork appearance. This is particularly evident on the Sherwood Street frontage, and to a lesser extent on Friern Barnet Lane. The area of unpainted render on the first floor of the south-eastern elevation is also in a poor condition and, although this is largely screened in longer public views by Nos 266-270 Friern Barnet Lane, it is readily apparent from closer range. Only the south-west facing elevation is in a reasonable condition – the cream render at first floor is evidently quite recent and in a good state of repair, while the yellow stock brick wall is sympathetic in colour and texture to the adjacent No 1 Sherwood Street. However, taken as a whole, the appeal property does not currently make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the neighbourhood.

¹ “Stolit K.6.0” in “Y16 42 38 Ocker Soforouge”.

² “Stolit Milano”.

9. Residential buildings in the surrounding area are predominantly brick-faced (albeit with a fair degree of variety in the type and colour of bricks used), though a considerable number have been rendered or pebbledashed to some extent. This is often relatively small parts of buildings (for example, the bay windows of Nos 257 to 283 Friern Barnet Lane opposite the appeal site), and sometimes a single floor or elevation, but there are a few examples of entire properties or blocks finished in render (such as the “Friern Place” terrace from 288 to 298 Friern Barnet Lane). Where render has been painted it is almost always white or cream. To that extent, the proposed use of a red finish here would be relatively unusual, though it would not be unique. However, because of its size and form which reflect its light industrial origins, the appeal property is already distinctive and, indeed, unusual in its immediate surroundings. At the same time, the proposed rendering would address, and remove the harm caused by, the current haphazard and patchwork appearance of the building’s external surfaces.
10. A suitably dark terracotta red would be subtle rather than garish. The horizontal white bands would break up the visual impact of the terracotta colour, preventing the building from appearing as a dominant or obtrusive feature in the streetscape (even if some of the current textural contrast between the brickwork and rendered bands would be lost). The proposed use of render would not lead to the appeal property dominating or overwhelming the NDHAs on either side, or the wider locality.
11. I have a degree of sympathy with the Council’s view that the problems which the appeal scheme seeks to rectify (and which they, of course, maintain that it would not do without introducing other new problems) are due, at least in part, to the quality of repairs and alterations which have been carried out to the appeal property over the years. I note also the Council’s suggestion³ that it would be supportive of painting the brickwork rather than rendering it, with a cream or off-white colour being used. However, my role here is to determine this appeal based on the planning merits of the proposal before me – it is not open to me to insist on work which has been carried out, presumably lawfully, being altered in alternative ways.
12. For the reasons set out above, I consider that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area; the setting of the adjacent NDHAs, and the architectural heritage from which their significance is principally derived, would be preserved. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies CDH01 and CDH08 of the 2025 BLP, and Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021. Together, and among other things, those policies seek to ensure that development promotes high quality design, uses materials of a suitable quality and appearance which respect local character and setting, and conserve and enhance heritage assets (including NDHAs such as locally listed buildings) in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition (1), I have specified the approved plans so as to provide certainty (2). The Council also proposed that a condition should be imposed requiring details of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building to be submitted for approval.

³ Set out in an e-mail from the case officer to the appellant’s agent on 12 June 2024 which was provided to me in the appeal evidence.

14. Notwithstanding that the submitted plans include references to the trade names of the type of renders and the colours proposed, it is a considerable part of the appellant's case here that the colour proposed "is to match the colour of the original brick to be in keeping with the original building" and to ensure that "there is no noticeable change to the building". Given this, I agree that such certainty is necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area; I have therefore imposed a condition along the lines suggested (3), although I have made minor changes to the wording to remove the reference to demolition and hard surfaces (which are not relevant in this case) but to require the provision of samples (to provide the necessary certainty).
15. For the avoidance of doubt, condition 3 takes effect prior to the commencement of the development, and I therefore note that the appellant agreed to this in their final comments during the appeal.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, and planning permission granted subject to conditions.

M Cryan

Inspector