
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2025 by E Nutman BA (Hons)

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/D/25/3367594

50 Acacia Road, London NW8 6AL

- 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 Lorna Quarrie on behalf of the Zedra Trust Company (Isle of Man) Ltd as trustee of the Arran Settlement against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application reference is 24/04259/FULL.
 - The development proposed is erection of trellis to the existing boundary.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description of proposed works on the planning application is extensive and describes the circumstances in which the trellis was erected and reasoning for it which is not in itself a description of development. In the interests of conciseness, I have therefore taken the description from the decision notice for the purposes of the appeal banner heading. However, I have had regard to the reasoning provided by the appellant in my assessment of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issues are:
 - i) whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the St John's Wood Conservation Area (CA); and
 - ii) the effect of the development on living conditions for occupiers of 52 Acacia Road (No 52), with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

5. The significance of the CA largely derives from its high-quality built environment and the origins of its development during the early to mid-19th century. Whilst building was speculative, the Eyre Estate built during this time set a standard by issuing building leases, specifying properties must have gardens and be

surrounded by walls. It was the construction of broad avenues of detached and semi-detached villas in substantial grounds which gave St John's Wood its distinctive character and established a new model of suburban style. Painted stucco or brick walls are a defining characteristic of the area. There is a presence of trellis structures affixed to these characteristic brick walls. However, these are generally discrete and modest in scale appearance. Boundary treatments in the CA mainly complement the design and materials of their parent buildings as noted in the St John's Wood Conservation Area Audit (2008) (CAA).

6. 50 Acacia Road (No 50) is a large, detached building set within a substantial plot and so is consistent with the suburban style of the CA. The building incorporates architectural features such as stone sills, brick patterned headers, recessed panels and a mansard roof. It is identified as an unlisted building of merit in the CA. The boundaries are mainly denoted by high walls. In these respects, the appeal property reflects the high quality of the built environment, positively contributing to the significance of the CA.
7. The deep profile and timber slatted design of the trellis gives it an overtly contemporary appearance detracting from the cohesive appearance of the brick wall that it is affixed to. It is also at odds with the prevailing traditional character and materials of boundary treatments in the CA. The trellis extends close to the front boundary which together with its elevated position means that it is appreciable from the street. It is also visible from the windows and gardens of neighbouring properties. Consequently, the trellis appears as a discordant feature within the CA.
8. I acknowledge similar trellises exist to the 'north-west and north-east boundary walls' on the appeal site. However, this is not reflective of the design or materials mainly utilised for boundary treatments within the CA. Moreover, there is no evidence before me to suggest that they benefit from planning permission, and consequently no information detailing the planning policies or other material considerations that may have been relevant at the time of their installation. Therefore, they do not justify the development before me which for the reasons set out is harmful to the CA.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Due to the scale of the proposal, the harm to the significance of St John's Wood Conservation Area is at the lower end of less than substantial having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Nevertheless, I must attach considerable weight and importance to the desirability of conserving the CA.
10. Whilst I note the appellant's desire to increase privacy, to restrict foxes from entering the property and digging up cables, and to deter crime and anti-social behaviour, there is nothing to indicate that a trellis of the design and materials before me is the only way of achieving such aims or that they amount to public benefits sufficient to outweigh the identified harm to the CA.
11. The appellant's statement refers to a planning permission granted in December 2023 at No 52 and contends that this approval establishes a precedent for modifications to boundary treatments. However, I have not been provided with any detailed information regarding this and it does not alter my site-specific

observations in respect of the appeal development which for the reasons set out is not sympathetic to the character or appearance of the CA.

12. I conclude, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the St John's Wood Conservation Area. Consequently, it conflicts with Policies 38, 39, and 40 of the City of Westminster City Plan (2021) (CP) which, amongst other things, require that developments are of a high quality design, preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Westminster's conservation areas and are sensitively designed so that they have regard to the prevailing scale, heights, character, materials, and degree of uniformity seen within the surrounding townscape.

Living Conditions

13. A development at 52 Acacia Road (No 52) was under construction when I visited the site. I was invited to view the development through the nearest window opening at No 52. As a result of the trellis, the boundary treatment's increased height has undoubtedly enclosed this aspect to some degree. Even so, the evidence before me indicates that this neighbouring window would serve a kitchen rather than a lounge or dining area for example where a more open aspect might be expected. In any case, the gaps in the structure due to its slatted design give an appreciation of the space beyond. Moreover, due to the window's position set away from the boundary, anyone in the kitchen at No 52 will have sufficient appreciation of the space between the boundary and above the top of the trellis. Taking all these factors into account, the trellis would not create an unacceptable level of enclosure.
14. I conclude, the development has an acceptable effect on living conditions for occupiers of No 52, with particular regard to outlook. In that particular regard, the development accords with Policies 7(A) and 38(C) of the CP which require development to ensure a good standard of amenity for new and existing occupiers and to prevent unacceptable impacts in terms of sense of enclosure.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. I have found that the development has an acceptable effect on living conditions for occupiers of No 52. Nevertheless, this is not a factor which overcomes the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Nutman

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR