



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2025 by S Jamieson BA (Hons) MPlan

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/D/25/3368513

27 Grove End Road, London NW8 9BS

- 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 and Mrs J Kluk against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02963/FULL.
 - The development proposed is alterations to the front boundary treatment including new railings and gates and provision of new vehicular access.
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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 Matter

3. The reason for refusal on the Council's decision specifically relates to the new vehicular access. I have defined the main issue on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed new vehicular access on highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrians.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal relates to a two-storey, detached dwelling. The property benefits from a generous front garden and driveway and is currently accessed via a pedestrian gate and separate vehicle entrance from Grove End Road. It is common ground between the main parties that the site is in a highly accessible location, being just a short walk from St John's Wood and Maida Vale tube stations and well-served by local buses. The appeal property is also close to a range of services, facilities and local landmarks, including a zebra crossing on Abbey Road, made famous by The Beatles album cover, which is located approximately 80 metres from the site.
6. This part of Grove End Road is therefore subject to frequent and varied pedestrian activity. Indeed, during my site visit, I observed a steady flow of passersby using the footway outside the appeal site. Whilst I accept this represents a snapshot in time, it suggests that the street experiences consistent use, by a wide range of pedestrians, throughout the day, with activity likely to increase during peak times and periods of higher visitor numbers.

7. The new vehicular access point would cross the public footway in very close proximity to the existing vehicular access point, potentially creating uncertainty as to where vehicles might enter or emerge from the site. Furthermore, the new access point would be flanked on either side by tall brick piers at the site boundary and would be situated close to a telephone box, cycle stands, pole mounted signage, and a mature tree. These factors have the potential to impede sightlines between pedestrians and any vehicles entering or exiting the site. Consequently, the proliferation of access points serving the appeal site would unacceptably increase risk for pedestrians. This could be particularly problematic for the visually impaired or those with limited mobility, including those with wheelchairs or prams, all of whom rely heavily on clear visibility and predictable traffic movements to navigate the footway safely.
8. The appellant suggests the new vehicular access would allow vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. However, an in/out arrangement could not be easily enforced. Furthermore, Appendix C of the appellant's Transport Statement shows that there is currently sufficient space within the site to allow vehicles to turn around, thereby avoiding the need to reverse onto the highway. Whilst this may require additional manoeuvring, there is nothing to suggest that it is so onerous or inconvenient as to deter drivers from doing so or that alterations to the landscaping could not be undertaken to increase the space available to manoeuvre if so desired. In the circumstances there is not a demonstrable need for the new vehicular access point.
9. I accept that the proposed new vehicular access is not located close to a junction and there is no contrary evidence to suggest that its width would not accord with the relevant standards. I also acknowledge that incidents reported in the vicinity of the access were not as a result of a deficiency in the local highway network. Nevertheless, this does not overcome my site-specific concerns.
10. Therefore, the proposed new vehicular access would have an unacceptable effect on highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrians. This would be contrary to Policies 25, 27, 28 and 43 of the City of Westminster City Plan insofar as they require that development prioritises and improves the pedestrian environment, resist the removal of boundary treatments and footways to facilitate crossovers, and seek to provide a safe public realm.
11. The Council's reason for refusal references Policy T6 of The London Plan (2021). That particular policy relates to residential parking requirements. Parking is not specifically referenced in the Council's reason for refusal and is not a matter in dispute. Therefore, whilst Policy T6 has not itself been determinative to my findings on highway safety, this does not overcome the conflict with the other policies of the development plan identified above.

Other Matters

12. I acknowledge that there are examples of dual vehicular accesses in the vicinity of the site. However, the full history of those access points is not before me and so I cannot be certain of the planning context in which they may have received permission. Nevertheless, their presence does not justify the appeal scheme which would be harmful for the site-specific reasons identified.
13. I accept that there is no dispute in respect of the design of the proposed brick boundary wall and railings and that precise details of the landscaping of the front

garden could be secured by condition. The Council's Officer report acknowledges that as the proposal is not a wholesale redevelopment of the site, a requirement to reduce parking provision could not be sustained. There is no dispute that the existing on-street parking bays will be unaffected by the proposal. I also accept that the proposed plans indicate matching brickwork, that any uncertainty regarding how the railings would be fixed could be addressed by condition and that details of a bicycle store are provided in the design and access statement. Even so, the acceptability of these particular matters does not justify the harm identified under the main issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Jamieson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

M Russell

INSPECTOR