
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2025 by F Bradford BA (Hons) MRTPI

Decision by Joanna Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/25/3368082

19 Westover Road, Wandsworth, London, SW18 2RE

- 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 Stephan Ludwig against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2025/1006.
 - The development proposed is the removal of the existing floor grille over front lightwell and the installation of a metal staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of the existing floor grille over front lightwell and the installation of a metal staircase at 19 Westover Road, Wandsworth, London, SW18 2RE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2025/1006, 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. Location Plan PP-13866085v1; Site and Location Plan P050; Plans as Existing & as Proposed P600; and Elevations & Sections as Existing & as Proposed P601.
 - 3) The external materials of the works hereby permitted shall match those materials used at the appeal property.

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. I have taken the description of development from the application form. I have however amended this to include only elements which constitute development.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The significance and special character of the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area (Conservation Area) stems from the relationship of the fine-grained grid of Victorian and Edwardian terraced and semi-detached residential development with the open space of the common. The site lies within sub-area D of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes Westover Road as having terraced, semi-detached and detached buildings of two storeys with an attic storey. The houses on Westover Road are of red brick construction, some with two storey canted bays. Above the bays, 11-21 Westover Road have semicircular windows to gabled roofs. The Baroque inspired doorcases with motifs to tympanum are also a distinctive feature. Reference is also made to the survival of brick boundary walls and piers.
6. The Council's Conservation and Design team considers that the quality and relatively unaltered appearance of this group of buildings makes them worthy of local listing. In addition, an Article 4 Direction covers front boundary retention and controls vehicle crossovers and parking in front gardens.
7. The appeal dwelling at 19 Westover Road sits within a row of three pairs of semi-detached dwellings that are uniform in their appearance. This includes lightwells and front boundaries, which are defined by low walls with railings and mature hedging, which softens the street scene and limits views towards the lower and ground floor elevations. These features form part of the established uniformity within this group and the wider street scene. These elements contribute positively to the character and appearance of this part of the street and the Conservation Area.
8. The proposed development would result in the removal of a grille serving the lower ground front window and the installation of an external stair and balustrade. By virtue of the siting of development, only the balustrade would be visible from the street.
9. The Housing Supplementary Planning Document (adopted November 2016) notes that railings around lightwells appear intrusive in small gardens and can compete for attention with the front boundary wall. However, the proposed balustrade would sit below the height of the existing boundary railings and would not appear as a prominent or dominant feature in views from the street. The design of the balustrade would reference the style of the existing front boundary railings but would be less ornate. This would ensure the balustrade would be visually subordinate, avoiding competition with the boundary railings and reinforcing its status as a secondary element.
10. Furthermore, the visual similarity between the existing and proposed development would ensure that the balustrade would not appear as an incongruous addition. The design and scale of the balustrade would establish a visual hierarchy, with the existing boundary railings continuing to contribute positively to the Conservation Area. In any case, the Article 4 direction requires planning permission for alteration of the front boundary. Retention of the front boundary treatments would therefore be within the Council's control.
11. I conclude that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area. As such, the proposed development would meet the statutory tests set out in

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. It would also accord with the Wandsworth Local Plan (2023), which, amongst other things, aim to ensure that development sustains, preserves or enhances the significance, appearance, character, function and setting of the historic environment; and to use a design-led approach to ensure physical integration with their surroundings and consideration of broader placemaking.

Conditions

12. For certainty and clarity, conditions are required to ensure that the approved development is commenced within three years and accords with submitted plans. In the interests of ensuring that the impact of development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, streetscape, and conservation area is acceptable, a condition is required which ensures that the materials of the proposed development match the existing property. Accordingly, this indicates that the proposed balustrade should be constructed in materials which match those of the existing front boundary railings.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Finlay Bradford

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Joanna Gilbert

INSPECTOR