
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2025

by **K Dryden BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/23/3330469

34 Circus Street, Greenwich, London SE10 8SN

- 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 Harman against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application ref is 23/1082/HD.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a new bike shed within the existing front garden of 34 Circus Street, plus the removal of the existing low level brick boundary wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. On 16 December 2025 the Government published a consultation 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system', together with an accompanying Written Ministerial Statement. The proposed reforms are draft and therefore may be subject to change. The consultation is ongoing, and the draft National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) does not constitute Government policy. Overall, insofar as it is relevant to this appeal, there is little change to the direction of the Framework, and I have therefore treated the consultation draft with limited weight and made my decision with regard to the current Framework.
3. In determining this appeal, I have a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving heritage assets and their setting, The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street SE10 (Grade II listed)¹, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the West Greenwich Conservation Area (WGCA).² Additionally, I have considered the heritage significance and setting of 28, 30 and 32 Circus Street, SE10, a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and the setting of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site (MGWHS)³.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, having particular regard to whether it would preserve or enhance the WGCA and the setting of the nearby Grade II

¹ Section 66 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

² Section 72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

³ Paragraph 213 b) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

listed building, The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street, in addition to the setting of adjacent properties, 28, 30 and 32 Circus Street (NDHA).

Reasons

5. Number 34 Circus Street forms part of a terrace located within a predominantly residential area. The street is characterised by attractive period properties with a varied building line which contributes positively to the area's established character and visual interest. No 34 features a decorative front elevation with double-height bay windows dressed in stucco mouldings. The property includes a modest front garden area, enclosed by a low boundary wall that reflects the prevailing treatment of adjacent residential buildings, which typically incorporate black metal railings or low brick walls. The entrance path is finished with decorative terracotta floor tiles. The property is situated at the junction with Brand Street, where the existing low boundary wall treatment allows extended views of the building's front elevation along the street vista. The property, and the terrace it forms part of, contributes positively to the character of the area.
6. The property is located towards the southern section of the WGCAs, which extends from Greenwich town centre, the pier, the Thames foreshore and Cutty Sark to the railway station with Georgian and Victorian housing on the edges of Blackheath to the south. WGCAs are significant for the quality of its architecture, and the character appraisal identifies that the appeal property is sited within the 'Crooms Hill, Hyde Vale and nineteenth century Greenwich' character area. This includes the Georgian houses of Crooms Hill and Gloucester Circus, an oval shaped formal garden which portrays a Regency style character which is sited beyond Circus Street to the east. With regard to boundary treatment, the West Greenwich Conservation Area Appraisal (2013) sets out that iron railings are often found in combination with a privet hedge and low London stock brick walls, elements which collectively contribute to the area's local distinctiveness.
7. The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street SE10 (Grade II listed) lies in close proximity to the site, on the junction corner with Circus Street. The property comprises a handsome and prominent building in the street scene. The listing states that the building is mid C19 and comprises a three-storey angled building with multicolour stock brick with stuccoed ground and first floor, in addition to a stuccoed frieze, moulded cornice and blocking course.
8. Furthermore, adjacent to the site, No 32, in addition to No 30 and No 28 Circus Street form a NDHA and are included in the Council's Local Heritage List (2023). The local listing states that the properties form a two-storey terrace, with low roofs behind cornices and mid-Victorian façades which are rendered and painted. At my site visit, I observed the valuable contribution that the group's aesthetic and architectural significance made to the locality, in combination with The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street, which are sited in close arrangement within the street scene.
9. The proposed bike shed would span the width of the front boundary of the site, adjacent to the entrance gate and would adjoin the boundary with the adjacent NDHA. The structure would be substantial in depth and height, extending above the height of the existing low boundary wall. The substantial scale and incongruous design of the development would appear at odds with its setting. This is in stark contrast to the existing traditional low boundary wall of the property and

its adjoining neighbour, No 36, as well as the prevailing low boundary treatments evident throughout the remainder of the terrace. Whilst it is noted that the hedge of the adjacent property, No 36, is higher than the height of the proposed development, the proposal nevertheless forms a solid and visually prominent structure. The impact is further emphasised by the use of metal for the roof planter element and timber slats for the sides of the bike shed, materials which would appear oppressive and discordant within the local context. I thereby find the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property, the surrounding area and would fail to preserve or enhance the WGCA or the setting of the identified designated heritage asset and NDHA.

10. My attention has been drawn to 9 Brand Street, where black painted timber slat fencing is used. However, I find that the height is consistent with surrounding railings as a boundary treatment and is slender in profile. Furthermore, the timber fencing and entrance gate to the commercial unit at 42 Circus Street does not share the same context, as the property falls outside the continuous row of terraces of which the appeal site forms a part and does not form part of the boundary treatment to a residential property.
11. The appellant has commented that the bike shed would be neatly concealed and unobtrusive to the street view as the neighbouring property, No 32, sits forward of the frontage to No 34, and given its substantial height in combination with the height of the adjoining NDHA properties. However, I find that the development would be highly visible and would appear incongruous in views looking east from the junction of Greenwich Street and Circus Street, in addition to views from Brand Street looking north towards the appeal site, which would harm the setting of the WGCA in addition to the identified designated heritage asset and NDHA.
12. In terms of the Framework, the harm that I have identified would be less than substantial given the limited scale of the development. Paragraph 215 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I acknowledge the representation made in support of the proposal and the reference to cycling as a form of sustainable transport. Additionally, the appellant has stated that there is no separate access to the rear garden of the property, and the occupants currently use the front entrance with storage of bicycles in the hallway and reception rooms, which adversely impacts on the internal use of the rooms. Whilst the proposal would provide secure, covered, external bicycle storage for the occupants who are keen cyclists and who regularly use their bicycles, and would therefore contribute to the use of sustainable transport, it has not been demonstrated that there is no alternative which would cause less harm.
13. Furthermore, although planting has the potential to contribute positively to the appearance of the area, I find in this instance that the high-level planters serve to further obscure the ground floor bay window and adds to the overall size and bulk of the boundary treatment. Additionally, while reference is made to benefits for wildlife, I have not been provided information to substantiate this view. I am satisfied that these public benefits should only be given limited weight, which is insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm found to the relevant designated heritage assets, The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street (Grade II listed), the WGCA, in addition to the NDHA.

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, and would result in unjustified harm to the setting and significance of the WGCA and the nearby Grade II listed building, The Morden Arms Public House, 1 Brand Street, in addition to the setting of adjacent properties, 28, 30 and 32 Circus Street (NDHA). This is contrary to policies D3 and HC1 of The London Plan (2021) which together seek to enhance local context through positively responding to local distinctiveness through layout, scale, appearance and shape with due regard to existing street forms and proportions. Furthermore, development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings.
15. Additionally, I find conflict with Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (GLP) which requires high quality design which takes account of the scale, height, bulk and massing of the adjacent townscape in addition to architectural and historical features and their settings. Furthermore, this is contrary to Policy DH3 of the GLP which seeks to protect and enhance heritage assets, including preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas and preserving the setting of listed buildings. I also find conflict with Policy DH(h) of the GLP which requests that proposals pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The local scale, the established pattern of development and landscape, building form and materials will all be taken into account.

Other Matters

16. Circus Street is sited in the buffer zone of the MGWHS, several streets from the boundary of the World Heritage Site (WHS). The heritage significance of the WHS is derived from its architectural, archaeological, historic and cultural value and is a heritage asset of the highest significance within the Framework. Whilst the appeal property is sited within the area depicted as a buffer zone by the Council, it does not contribute to the significance of the MGWHS and it is set sufficiently far away from its edge for the setting and significance of the WHS not to be adversely affected by the modest scale of this proposal.
17. I have been provided with a number of examples where bike sheds have been approved in front garden areas in the London area. This includes two addresses within the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, with one example located in a conservation area. Whilst I do not have the full details of these cases, the addresses provided do not have the same site context and are sited a distance from the appeal property. Each proposal must in any event be assessed on its own merits. Accordingly, these examples are of limited weight in my decision and do not outweigh the harm that I have found.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

K Dryden

INSPECTOR