



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 January 2026

by J D Westbrook BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/25/3375685

56-58 Lark Lane, Liverpool, L17 8UU

- 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 Lewis Baigent (La Parilla) against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25F/2203.
 - The development proposed is to erect a metal pergola structure with fixed glazed roof, metal railings and decorative structural posts to enclose existing external seating area to the front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed structure and railings on the character and appearance of the Lark Lane Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey, wide-fronted building set back from the road on a corner plot at the junction of Lark Lane with Hadassah Grove. It has a restaurant on the ground floor and an apartment on the first floor. There is a patio area to the front with seating for restaurant patrons. This area can be partially covered by retractable canopies across much of the front elevation of the property, and there is a low wooden palisade fence marking the front boundary of the site. There is a small enclosed outbuilding at the southern end of the seating area, which may be used for storage and, at the northern end of the patio area, there is a path to the door which gives access to the first-floor apartment. The site, along with the rest of Lark Lane, lies within the Lark Lane Conservation Area (CA).
4. The proposed development would involve the erection of a metal pergola structure across the whole frontage of the building, with a glazed mono-pitch roof, hipped at the southern end. It would also involve the removal of the existing low palisade fence and its replacement with taller metal railings.
5. Lark Lane is a busy, one-way commercial street with a number of restaurants, cafes, coffee shops and independent retailers and service providers. It is effectively a central spine road that runs through the middle of the CA. The roadway itself is reduced in width by the use of planters along parts of its length, with limited on-street parking at points along the road. Other spaces between the planters incorporate the use of tables and chairs associated with the numerous cafes and restaurants along its length.

6. Policy HD1 of the Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP) relates to Heritage Assets, including Conservation Areas. The policy indicates that the Council will support proposals which conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of Liverpool. It goes on to state that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This follows the thrust of national policy on the historic environment as set out the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Policy SP3 of the LP relates to design of new developments in neighbourhood centres and indicates that it should have regard to heritage assets within the Centre in accordance with Policy HD1.
7. Policy UD1 of the LP indicates that development proposals should demonstrate that certain aspects have been taken into account, including street character, materials and designated and non-designated historic assets. Policy UD2 states that the design of development proposals should be considered from both a macro and a micro scale, with adequate responses to issues including, scale, relationship to existing structures, function, amenity, and its relationship to the public realm.
8. Policy UD7 of the LP states that alterations and extensions to existing buildings should ensure that the scale, proportion, form, materials and character of the existing building are considered in the proposals, and that distinctive historic features on the existing building should be retained.
9. The main body of the appeal property is a white-rendered, two-storey building with three first-floor windows above a central main door and two windows on the ground floor. The windows have distinctive and significant semi-circular lintels, while the central first-floor window and the main door underneath have additional detailing to lintels and jambs. The lintel design is continued on the false windows in the first-floor side elevation of the building which, in turn, is continued in the first-floor windows of the houses along Hadassah Grove to the rear. On the south side of the main building is a narrow, single-storey extension that appears to be of relatively recent construction, and on the north side is a two-storey, slightly recessed, extension which includes the access to the first-floor apartment. These appear as subservient to the main building.
10. The existing property has retractable canopies across the front of the main building and the extension to the south. These cut across the tops of the ground floor windows. Much of the ground floor wall beside the windows and door is taken up with somewhat visually unsympathetic restaurant advertisements, and there is a similar advertisement on the patio side of the front outbuilding. In my opinion, the canopies, advertisements and the outbuilding are unattractive in the context of the fundamental character and appearance of the building.
11. In a previous appeal decision relating to a proposed development at the front of the building (ref: APP/Z4310/W/23/3319301), the inspector noted that “the surrounding area is characterised by buildings dating from the early nineteenth century.. (and) ..the significance of the CA derives from the attractive buildings which reflect the rapid growth and wealth of Liverpool.... Generally, the architecture of the buildings and their uses within Lark Lane provide an attractive and vibrant character that contributes to the significance of the CA.” I concur with this view.
12. With regard to the appeal property itself, the inspector stated that “with its wider frontage, forecourt and rendered elevation to Lark Lane, and the similarly

proportioned and detailed window openings and central decorative entrance, the appeal building is an attractive feature within the street. Further, the paved forecourt provides a setting for the building and a spaciousness to the street frontage. Consequently, the appeal site contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA. The timber-framed pergola and the roof cut across the ground floor windows and entrance detailing, obscuring the front of the host building at street level and detract from the contribution the appeal building makes to the street scene.”

13. I acknowledge that the current proposal would involve a more sympathetically designed pergola than that proposed in the earlier scheme, and that the highest part of the pergola against the front elevation would be positioned between the ground- and first-floor windows. Nevertheless, the pergola and railings, although visually permeable, would still effectively obscure a significant amount of the ground floor of the main building and would diminish the positive impact of the overall frontage. This would be harmful to the character of the CA and to the appearance of the street-scene along Lark Lane in particular.
14. The appellant contends that the proposed pergola and railings would largely mirror a similar development at No 52 Lark Lane, which is situated on the opposite corner plot with Hadassah Grove, and makes reference to another recent appeal decision relating to that property (ref: APP/Z4310/W/24/3350796). In that case, the appeal was allowed, and the inspector noted certain similarities with the situation found at No 56-58. However, there are also significant differences, not least the fact that the building at No 52 is not as ornate, having plain windows and door with no decorative lintels. In addition, the building at No 52 has no side extension and the pergola extends around the side of the property where it is largely shielded from view by a high side wall and mature trees along the boundary with Hadassah Grove.
15. In addition to the more ornate frontage at No 56-58, which is an important feature in the street scene, the distinctive historic design features on the façade of the building are clearly visible around the entrance to Hadassah Grove. They are then largely continued in the historical residential properties immediately behind the appeal property and further along Hadassah Grove to the east, some of which are, apparently, Listed Buildings. On this basis, the appeal property is more readily seen in the context of the development along the northern side of Hadassah Grove than is the case with No 52 on its southern side. The proposed pergola and railings would disrupt the unity of the front elevation and be harmful to the context of the building in its immediate surroundings.
16. On this issue, therefore, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and its surroundings, and although the harm to the CA would be less than substantial, nevertheless great weight must be given to harm to a heritage asset. Before granting permission for any such proposals, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. In this case, the appellant contends that the public benefits would involve the replacement of existing features at the front of the property with more attractive features that would also mirror the development at the front of No 52. In addition, it is contended that the proposed pergola with its glazed roof would assist in reducing noise emanating from use of the outside tables on the front seating area. I acknowledge that there could be some limited benefits along the lines suggested

by the appellant. However, I have no details as to whether the existing features at the front of the property have been authorised and, in any case, I do not consider that such limited public benefits would clearly outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the CA that I have outlined above.

Conclusions

18. In conclusion, I find that the proposed pergola and railings would result in a degree of interference with the visual unity of the important design features on the front elevation of the appeal property. This would be detrimental to the street scene along this part of Lark Lane and, along with disruption to the cohesion of the design features around the entrance to Hadassah Grove and the residential properties to the rear, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the wider CA. On this basis, it would conflict with Policies HD1, SP3, UD1, UD2 and UD7 of the LP, and accordingly, I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR