



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2026

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/25/3371379

Vine Lodge, Church Road, Isleworth TW7 4PH

- 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 Manoj Khanna against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The application reference is P/2024/2168.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing building and creation of 6 self-contained flats with bin storage, cycle store and car park.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for an award of costs has been made by Mr Manoj Khanna against the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow. This is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i) the effect of the demolition of the dwelling and the proposed replacement building on character and appearance of the Spring Grove Conservation Area (SGCA), taking into consideration its status as a locally listed building;
 - ii) Whether the proposal would deliver a suitable mix of housing;
 - iii) The effects of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants;
 - iv) The effect of the proposal on existing trees;
 - v) Whether the proposal would be acceptable in terms of addressing mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements;
 - vi) Whether the proposal would be acceptable in respect of addressing carbon dioxide emissions.

Reasons

Effect on Heritage Assets

4. The appeal relates to a detached dwelling on the southern side of Church Road, set within a spacious plot with a front garden screened by a tall boundary wall and hedge, a detached outbuilding within the side garden and a large rear garden. The

site features established trees and other foliage creating a verdant setting. The dwelling itself is two storeys with a prominent front gable to one side and three dormer windows in the front roof slope. There is a porch addition to the front elevation at ground floor level, and a garage extension, converted to a bedroom internally, stands in front of the gable. The frontage is white painted.

5. The site lies within the SGCA, which encompasses mainly residential streets between the A4 Great West Road to the north and the A315 London Road to the south. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2019) (the CAA) sets out that the special architectural and historic interest of the SGCA derives from an estate planned to be a grand Victorian suburb by Henry Daniel Davies, though much of the built form was not constructed until the 20th century. Early houses were in the style of tall classical-style villas standing in spacious gardens, with faux Bath Stone the prevailing material. Other styles are represented, including the Italianate stuccoed mansion of Campion House, Gothic structure of Lancaster House, and Arts and Crafts styled semi-detached properties, which contribute to its overall character, as does the greenery afforded by tree-lined streets and front garden settings. It is added that later development has evolved beyond the original estate planning, but is respectful. This considerable architectural and historic interest contributes to a high degree of heritage significance.
6. Vine Lodge was added to the Council's local heritage list in August 2024. It is noted as dating from around 1860, forming part of the original Davies estate. Other submissions identify it as one of a pair of gardener's cottages to serve the estate, the other of which was demolished to make way for Osterley Lodge, which would explain the blank eastern elevation of Vine Lodge. The listing further notes its rarity in being constructed in the villa style, with only 1% of buildings in Osterley and Spring Grove so categorised in the Council's Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD. It is therefore stated to hold architectural and historic significance as a surviving example of the Italianate 'stone' villas surrounding the listed Spring Grove house that were constructed as part of Davies planned speculative estate.
7. The appellant points to the front dormer windows, porch and garage as detracting modern additions that have a negative effect on the dwelling and conservation area. The local listing acknowledges that the dwelling lacks a number of the features typical of an Italianate villa, which may have been lost to past alterations, and notes this is particularly evident when viewing the front elevation. In contrast, the rear elevation does retain some characteristic features, including corbels and external window openings. I saw on site that the front elevation has undergone more extensive change through these later additions, but these are well concealed by the boundary wall treatments and are countered by the attractive, unpainted stonework which is retained to the side and rear elevations. The blank flank wall to the eastern elevation is a conspicuous feature, and whilst perhaps not a positive visual element of the dwelling, it is revealing of its past as one half of an original pair of dwellings. Importantly, the alterations over time have not significantly altered the original scale of the building or its plot coverage which form part of the original estate layout by Davies.
8. Therefore, whilst the building has been altered over time and not always sympathetically, it nevertheless still holds demonstrable architectural and historic significance and I concur with the Council that it can be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

9. I have noted the appellant's disquiet at the timing of the Council's addition of Vine Lodge to its local list. However, it is not within the scope of this appeal to pass judgment on the Council's procedures for doing so. The fact that Vine Lodge was not so identified earlier, for example in the 2019 CAA, is not in itself a persuasive argument that it does not merit a place on the local list or consideration as an NDHA. My considerations are based on the specific merits of the building as an NDHA, having regard to its surviving features and documented history.
10. The proposal seeks to demolish the dwelling. Beyond its view that the building is at best a neutral contributor to the SGCA, the appellant does not offer any substantive justification for the total loss of the building. There is no evidence before me that the building is structurally unsound or otherwise unfit to continue as a residence. The dwelling stands by itself within the Church Road streetscene, with the imposing 1930s apartment blocks of Osterley House to the east and the semi-detached villas of the same period opposite all contributing positively to the quality of the streetscene. A later dwelling and terrace block to the west dating from the 1960s and 1970s are regarded as neutral and negative contributors respectively. Hence, this section of Church Road illustrates various periods of the planned estate, with Vine Lodge the earliest surviving example. As a result, its singular presence, tall boundary wall and diminutive scale compared to Osterley House, are distinctive characteristics that allow Vine Lodge to stand out as a unique and positive element of the streetscape within the SGCA.
11. Therefore, the total loss of the NDHA would result in a harmful loss of significance, having regard to Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Moreover, the demolition of the dwelling would result in the loss of an original part of the planned Davies estate that would erase the architectural and aesthetic value of the appeal site and so would harm the heritage significance of the SGCA.
12. The proposed building would stand two storeys in height with a crown roof. It would have a symmetrical design, with twin gables flanking the front elevation, a central entrance portico and ground floor bay windows. The elevations would be constructed in yellow brick, with red brick and Portland stone details, slate effect roof tiles and white, aluminium-framed windows. The building would occupy a substantial T-shaped footprint, with a central wing projecting to the rear. Each flat would have a terrace/balcony on the rear elevation, enclosed by glass panelling.
13. The materials palette is indicated to reflect that of Osterley House, but the overall form of the building seeks to resemble nearby dwellings by including features such as front gables and bay windows. However, the overall design would not reflect the original villa style of the planned estate, or any of the prevailing architectural styles within the street. In particular, the massing of the building would be substantial, much greater than other dwellings and exacerbated by the dominant height and expanse of the crown roof, a shape not common within the immediate area and which would exceed the height of Osterley House next door. The wide footprint would create a horizontal emphasis at odds with the verticality of the villas opposite that is expressed through their tall chimney stacks and double-height bays.
14. The dominant bulk of the building would be clearly visible due to the lowering of the front boundary wall and significant removal of greenery. This and the communal bin store placed conspicuously to the front of the site would reveal the building as a block of flats rather than a dwelling. There would also be a vehicular access along

the western side of the site and a large extent of the existing rear garden would be hard paved and given over to parking and manoeuvring space. These elements would add to the incongruity of the overall design and engender a very different character to the site, particularly to the rear where the tranquillity of the mature garden space would be replaced with a more active, multi-user space dominated by car parking.

15. Overall, the proposal would form a conspicuous and uncharacteristic building that would fail to reference the prevailing architectural styles that contribute to the heritage significance of the SGCA. It would not form an acceptable replacement for the positive contribution made by the existing building to the conservation area.
16. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would result in the unjustified loss of an NDHA and the replacement building would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the SGCA and would harm its heritage significance. This would conflict with the aims of Policies D4, D6 and HC1 of the London Plan (March 2021) (the LP21) and Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC4 of the Hounslow Local Plan (September 2015) (the HLP) which together require high quality design in all development within the Borough which respects the local character of the area and conserves, and takes opportunities to enhance, the significance of heritage assets.
17. In this case, the harm to the significance of the SGCA would be less than substantial, in the language of the Framework and having regard to the scale of the development relative to the overall conservation area. Paragraph 215 directs that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. I return to this balance later in my decision.
18. Separately, Paragraph 216 of the Framework states that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect NDHAs, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The NDHA has local rather than regional or national significance; but given the dwelling would be demolished, its significance would be entirely lost and this is a matter to which I afford considerable weight in the overall planning balance.

Housing Mix

19. The proposal would replace the existing dwelling with four two-bedroom flats and two studio flats. The appellant argues that the dwelling only has two adequately sized bedrooms, with one being less than 7sqm, though the Council's puts the size at 8.13sqm. In any event, I saw that the existing garage has been converted to an additional bedroom and I am satisfied that the overall size and layout of the dwelling is suitable for family occupation.
20. Under Policy SC3 of the HLP, the Council seeks a mix of housing size, type and tenure according to need, with the ratios given in Table SC 3.1¹ as the starting point. I have no newer evidence of housing need that would indicate a different ratio should be sought. Policy H10 of the LP21 further sets out that schemes should generally consist of a range of unit sizes, having regard to robust local evidence of the need for additional family housing and the role of one and two bed units in freeing up existing family housing.

¹ 30% one-bedroom, 40% two-bedroom, 25% three-bedroom and 5% four-bedroom for market housing schemes

21. The mix in this case would not accord with the Council's preferred housing mix in that it would not provide any three-bedroom unit, of which at least 1.5 would be expected in a development of six units (in practice, at least one unit). Moreover, the demolition of the existing dwelling would lead to a net loss of family-sized units.
22. The loss of a larger, family-sized home would be contrary to the recognised need in the above policies to provide a suitable ratio of family-sized dwellings in new developments. The proposal would conflict with Policies SC3 and H10 in these respects.
23. In reaching a view, I recognise that the proposal would deliver a net gain of five residential units, for which there is a need generally in the Borough and Greater London. I also note the Council's position that it is able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, of which the appeal site is not one. These are material considerations to be factored into the heritage and overall planning balances set out below.

Neighbours' Living Conditions

24. The Council's third reason for refusal refers to the effects of the proposed building on outlook from the neighbouring dwelling to the west, Ardmore, and potential loss of privacy due to overlooking from windows in the side elevations and the proposed rear balconies.
25. The proposed building would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling, extending some 18.5 metres in depth and up to 9.7 metres high. However, much of this massing would stand further forward than the existing dwelling to align the front elevation with that of Ardmore. Indeed, comparing the plans, the main body of the building would not extend as far back as the existing rear elevation of Vine Lodge. There would be additional depth beyond in the form of the proposed rear wing, but this would be placed centrally on the rear elevation and significantly inset from each side boundary. As such, the main side elevations would not be unduly deep or extend conspicuously beyond the prevailing depth of neighbouring development.
26. The proposed side elevation would stand closer to the boundary with Ardmore compared to that of Vine Lodge, the distance indicated to be some 5.9 metres. It would be clearly visible from the side facing window at first floor level, but this already takes in the massing of Vine Lodge and that of Osterley House beyond. The separation distance would be sufficient to ensure that there would remain views from this window to the north-east towards the street and to the south-east over neighbouring rear gardens. The proposed building would have no more than a minor presence in the periphery of views from the rear windows of Ardmore, which would continue to encompass a broad vista to the south over its own rear garden.
27. I accept that the scale of the building would be apparent in views from the garden of Ardmore, but the proposed setback from the shared boundary would reduce the immediacy of the building in these views. I also note the evidence that the building would not cause harmful losses of sunlight or daylight to the windows and garden of Ardmore. Drawing these factors together, I am satisfied that neighbouring occupants would not suffer material harm to existing levels of outlook or endure a harmful sense of enclosure as a result of the development.
28. Turning to privacy, the plans appear to show obscured glazing to all side windows at ground and first floor levels, and obscured glass panels to the proposed rear

balconies. The plans suggest that the side panels are intended to be at a height of around 1.7m to prevent outlook towards neighbours.

29. Of the six windows in each side elevation, four would serve en-suites/bathrooms, which are expected to have obscured glass for privacy. The other two windows would serve living/kitchen areas. These are living spaces where obscured glass could undermine the quality of the space by restricting outlook. However, in this case, the rooms would also be served by south-facing double doors onto the balconies, which would provide sufficient light and outlook for these rooms. There would also be similar arrangement in the studio units within the rear wing, with obscurely glazed side facing windows and clear double doors to the rear, which again would be adequate for light and outlook. The use of obscured glazing would prevent overlooking of the neighbouring properties. Details of this could be secured via condition, and in this matter I find that neighbours would not suffer a harmful loss of privacy.
30. The Council's delegated report raises further concerns not specifically mentioned in its reasons for refusal. These relate to noise and disturbance to neighbouring occupants from vehicular movements to and from the proposed parking area at the rear of the site. I have addressed this above in terms of the effect on the character of the area. The access by vehicles to the rear of the site, with attendant noise from engines and car doors being shut, and headlight glare at night, would be noticeable to neighbouring residents given the existing tranquillity of the space as a private rear garden. I accept that such activity would not be constant, but it would nevertheless represent a significant change in the use of the area that would undermine neighbours' enjoyment of their properties, particularly outdoor spaces.
31. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not cause material harm to neighbours' living conditions in terms of outlook and privacy, but would cause harm in terms of noise and disturbance. This would conflict with Policies CC2, SC4 and EQ5 of the HLP and D6, D13 and D14 of the LP21 which together require development to achieve high standards of design that protects the amenity of existing residents, including with respect to noise.

Effect on Trees

32. Policy G7 of the LP21 states that development proposals should ensure that, wherever possible, existing trees of value are retained, and where planning permission is granted that necessitates the removal of trees there should be adequate replacement, based on the existing value of the benefits of the trees removed determined by an appropriate valuation system. The appellant has submitted an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Constraints Plan and Tree Removal Plan with the application.
33. The existing site is well vegetated with mature trees to the front, side and rear, interspersed with bushes and other planting. I understand two yew trees, identified in the appellant's evidence as trees T4 and T5, are subject to a tree preservation order. These are not proposed for removal.
34. A total of eleven trees are proposed to be removed to facilitate the development. This includes a group of trees to the side of the existing dwelling, a further cluster towards the rear boundary, one adjacent to the rear corner of the dwelling and one in the front garden. Two of these are indicated to be dead or dying, and categorised as U. The others comprise two Category B2 trees and seven Category C2 trees. All

are classed as early mature or mature, having normal structural condition, with life expectancies of between 10 and over 40 years.

35. Twelve replacement trees are proposed, however the evidence before me does not include details of the species or size of proposed trees. The location of the trees is set out indicatively on the Tree Protection Plan, showing most concentrated to the rear corner of the site, with limited tree planting to the front shown in somewhat confined positions between the bin storage and front elevation of the building or close to the protected yew tree and retained fig tree to the front of the site.
36. In the absence of further details, I am not satisfied that the proposed replacement trees would adequately maintain the established verdant character of the site, particularly to the front, or suitably mitigate for the loss of biodiversity resulting from the removal of existing, mature trees. The loss of existing trees on site has not therefore been justified, and I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the requirements of Policy G7 of the LP21. There would also be conflict with Policy CC4 of the HLP in terms of its requirements that any development within or affecting a conservation area must conserve and take opportunities to enhance the character of the area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

37. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), with an uplift of 10% required over the baseline. The appellant has not submitted any assessment of the existing biodiversity levels on site or how the required uplift would be achieved, instead suggesting that it could easily be achieved via a planning condition, owing to the large garden area within the site.
38. Should the appeal succeed, it would be subject to the statutory biodiversity gain condition set out in Schedule 7A. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that it would generally be inappropriate, when determining a planning application for a development subject to BNG, to be refused on the grounds that the biodiversity gain objective will not be met, though it also states that consideration may be required as to whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being successfully discharged.
39. In this instance, the proposal would involve a considerable reduction in the overall extent of the site given over to soft landscaping, in particular to the side and rear where areas presently laid to lawn or containing established trees and bushes would be replaced by a hard surfaced driveway and parking areas. Potential habitat areas would be limited to small sections to the front and to the rear corner of the site, and along the western boundary. The loss of mature trees, to be replaced on only a marginally greater than 1:1 ratio, indicates at best a very limited potential gain in this respect.
40. In summary, there is no evidence before me to quantify the existing levels of biodiversity on site. Consequently, it is not possible to understand the extent of measures that might be required to achieve mandatory BNG, but the proposed site layout offers no assurances in this respect. Moreover, there is nothing before me to suggest that any BNG can be achieved off-site, nor any mechanism to secure this.
41. The Framework makes clear that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less

harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

42. In this case, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would avoid harm to biodiversity, less still achieve the statutory 10% uplift. In the circumstances, I am not satisfied that, in the event that permission is granted, the development would be capable of complying with the statutory biodiversity gain condition. Therefore, I find there would be conflict with Policy G6 of the LP21 and Policy GB7 of the HLP, which together require development proposals to manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain to increase the quantity and quality of the borough's biodiversity.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

43. Policies EQ1 and EQ2 of the HLP set out the Council's ambitions to move towards being a low carbon borough, by minimising the demand for energy, promoting renewable and low carbon technologies and the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. Policy SI2 of the LP21 requires that major development should be net zero-carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the published energy hierarchy, with a 10% reduction resulting from the use of energy efficiency measures only in residential developments. The HLP policies go further than the LP21 by requiring all developments, major and minor, to meet the carbon emission reduction requirements set out in the LP21.
44. The appellant has provided an Energy Assessment which proposes the use of passive and active design measures, along with the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps and photovoltaic panels. The assessment indicates that the development would be capable of achieving cumulative on-site savings of 80%, with a cash in lieu contribution of £2,362 required to offset the shortfall in achieving net zero.
45. The appellant has indicated that this contribution could be secured through a legal agreement required by condition of any planning permission granted. However, the PPG sets out that a negatively worded condition limiting the development that can take place until a planning obligation or other agreement has been entered into is unlikely to be appropriate other than in exceptional circumstances where there is clear evidence that the delivery of the development would otherwise be at serious risk. There is no clear evidence to suggest that such exceptional circumstances would apply here.
46. No planning obligation is before me to otherwise secure the aforementioned contribution. Therefore, the proposal would fail to meet requirements with regard to carbon dioxide emissions, in conflict with Policy EQ1 of the HLP and the relevant criteria of Policy SI2 of the LP21.

Other Matters

47. The Council raised concern with the location of proposed cycle parking and the safety of the proposed vehicular access route down the western side of the site, owing to a lack of separation for pedestrians and vehicles. However, this has not been pursued as a reason for refusal, with the Council indicating it would have sought amendments to the design were the proposal otherwise acceptable. I have noted these concerns, but also acknowledge the number of vehicles using the access would be limited, movements would be low speed and interactions between cars and pedestrians would be infrequent. Ultimately, the evidence before me is not

sufficient to conclude that this would amount to a further material harm weighing against the proposal.

48. I have noted the Council's conclusions on other matters, and points raised in public representations. On the evidence before me, I have not identified any additional benefits or harms of material weight to be factored into the planning balances.

Conclusion

49. For reasons set out above, the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to heritage significance of the SGCA. Set against this, the proposal would deliver a net gain of five residential units for the Borough's housing stock, in line with the key aim of the Framework to boost the supply of housing. However, these would be modest contributions to the Council's overall housing targets, and so attract only limited weight in favour of the proposal.
50. There would be benefits arising from the economic activity generated for the local building trade in implementing the development and from subsequent engagement by future occupants in the local economy. Again, the scale of the development is such that these benefits would attract limited weight in support of the appeal.
51. These benefits, taken cumulatively, would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, to which the Framework directs I must give great weight. Consequently, the Framework indicates that this provides a clear reason for refusing the proposal.
52. Beyond the harm to the heritage significance of the SGCA, the proposal would also result in the total loss of an NDHA and would be unacceptable in terms of neighbours' living conditions, housing mix, trees, biodiversity net gain and carbon emissions. This results in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. I afford very significant weight to this conflict.
53. Given the outcome of the heritage balance, it follows that the acknowledged benefits of the proposal would also not be sufficient to outweigh the broader totality of harm identified in the overall development plan conflict above. There are no other material considerations that would outweigh the development plan conflict and justify granting planning permission in this case.
54. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR