



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 21 November 2025

by **N Paine BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 May 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/X5990/W/25/3366040

13-14 Randolph Road, City of Westminster, London W9 1AN

- 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 Jorge Villon against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01310/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of single-storey basement, excavation of front lightwell to extend to the new basement level, associated internal alterations, installation of new mechanical plant equipment, and associated works.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/X5990/Y/25/3366039

13-14 Randolph Road, City of Westminster, London W9 1AN

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jorge Villon against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01311/LBC.
 - The works proposed are described as the construction of a single-storey basement, excavation of front lightwell to extend to the new basement level, associated internal alterations, installation of new mechanical plant equipment, and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Jorge Villon against City of Westminster Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. There are two appeals on this site. They relate to the planning application and listed building consent for the same scheme. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with them together, except where otherwise indicated.
4. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to listed buildings, I have had special regard to sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) ("the Act").
5. During these appeals a draft version of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") was published for consultation. Having regard to the matters in dispute between the parties and the draft status of the document with possibility of change following consultation, I attach limited weight to it. I am therefore satisfied that the interests of the parties would not be prejudiced by proceeding to determine the appeals without inviting further comments.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 13 and 14, Randolph Road W9 (Ref: 1265255) ("the LB") and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Maida Vale Conservation Area ("the CA").

Reasons

Designated Heritage Assets

7. The LB is a semi-detached stucco fronted dwellinghouse. Historically the building stood as two dwellings, however, they have been combined and altered internally to form a single dwelling with one rear garden. The LB was listed in 1986, and the list description mentions that the building dates from the mid-19th century. The listing explains the architectural detailing of the front elevation including the paired porches, two storey canted bay and cornice detailing and the LB stands as an elegant, traditionally designed dwelling within the streetscape.
8. The LB is also identified as having group value and most of the dwellings in Randolph Road are also listed. Collectively, they are a group of distinguished period properties of similar character, age, and appearance which provide good examples of the early residential development in this part of London. The appeal site is therefore part of an architecturally unified and important collection of buildings within a historic streetscape.
9. The inside of the LB has been altered over time and has a more modern character. Limited original features such as plasterwork, decorative mouldings, architraves, skirting boards, internal doors or fireplaces remain. However, where they do exist, they provide a valuable reminder of the history of this building.
10. The significance of the LB, in so much as it relates to the appeals before me, is largely derived from its age, form and its architectural detailing. These attributes mark it as an important survival of a period dwellinghouse. The status and significance of the LB is clearly apparent when viewed from the front and this is reinforced by its context within a historic street. The lightwell is an important component of the frontage; designed to bring natural light, access and ventilation to the building, its traditional materials, depth and proportions strongly contribute toward the historic character of the listed building.
11. The surroundings in which the LB is experienced and appreciated directly contribute to its special interest and significance. Any development therefore has the potential to impact on the listed building and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.
12. Buildings in the CA include those constructed from brick and / or stucco. While many of these are elegant houses, villas, or flats; commercial buildings also feature within the CA. The CA benefits from pleasant roads with trees also lining many streets. Open vistas, landscaping, and garden spaces create a leafy setting that complements the buildings and their surroundings.
13. Given the above, and based on my observations, I find that the significance of the CA, as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the attractive townscape, including the interconnection of the buildings to each other, the spaces

around them and their relationship with the leafy setting of the streets. The LB, together with the historic buildings in its immediate vicinity are a key component of that significance.

Effect of the Proposal

14. Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for the excavation of basement accommodation below: the existing dwelling, the existing front lightwell and part of the existing rear garden. It is also proposed to incorporate inlet and exhaust air terminations in the rear elevation of the appeal building; these would be incorporated into a stone planter. A heat pump with acoustic enclosure would also be sited within the front light well at the proposed basement level.
15. The Framework identifies heritage assets as irreplaceable resources which should be conserved and the existing lightwell makes a valuable contribution to the special interest of this listed building. It is proposed to extend this lightwell downwards and this would significantly alter a sensitive and architecturally significant part of the listed building.
16. The deepening of the lightwell would alter the historic form of this part of the fabric of the listed building with consequent erosion of the plan and a loss of historic fabric. This would harm the understanding of the building, including its different elements and the subservience of the basement. The details of the heat pump are not sufficient to address whether or not this would further add to that harm.
17. I appreciate that visibility of the lightwell depth beyond the appeal site would also be limited when viewed from the street and CA; however, in this context, the lightwell is a key part of the building's special interest and significance. Listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether public views can be gained.
18. Some information has been provided about alterations to lightwells on other buildings which the Council found acceptable. However, the special interest and significance of these heritage assets has not been shown to be identical to the current proposal. As set out above, each case is specific and turns on the unique circumstances of the existing heritage asset and the impact of any alterations. This therefore does not provide adequate justification for the proposed works.
19. Accordingly, the greater depth of the lightwell and the inclusion of a heat pump would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
20. The excavation of the wider basement would result in the removal of the lower ground floor slab with an extension of an existing staircase section. The character and appearance of the lower ground floor is open and more modern with a heated floor. The stone cantilevered staircases do form part of the historic fabric and these staircases would be retained during works and technical evidence has been provided to show how this would be achieved.
21. The existing staircase would be extended to provide access to the proposed basement. All details are proposed to match existing, including a profiled mahogany handrail and cast-iron balusters. These would be acceptable in respect to any impact on the LB, any other listed buildings, and the character or appearance of the CA.

22. The basement would have a floor to ceiling height of 2.7 metres, and I note that floor levels would vary. The swimming pool would have a greater floor to ceiling height exceeding 2.7 metres; however, this greater depth would not be experienced once the pool is filled with water.
23. Paragraph 45.7 of the City Plan says that limiting the extent and depth of basement development can help reduce both the risks associated with basement development and mitigate negative environmental and amenity impacts. In this case having considered the technical evidence before me and the views of the relevant consultees, I consider that environmental and amenity impacts could be controlled by appropriately worded conditions.
24. Furthermore, paragraph 45.10 of the City Plan also requires sufficient soil depth below garden areas, and the proposed works would respond to this requirement by incorporating floor level changes to the proposed basement. The drawings also show that the proposal would leave a margin of undeveloped garden land proportionate to the scale of the development and the size of the garden around the entire site boundary.
25. The garden level to the rear of the dwelling is lower than the street level and this creates a situation where the ground floor is level with the street, and the lower ground floor is level with the rear gardens. Given this change in ground levels, and as a matter of fact and degree, I find the proposed basement would not be more than one storey below the lowest original floor level of the building.
26. As indicated above, the floor to ceiling heights of the proposed basement do exceed 2.7 metres in parts, despite this, I have not found any material harm from the proposal. I therefore find the proposal to be compliant with Policy 45, B, 3 of the Westminster City Plan 2021.
27. Tying these considerations together, I have found no harm to the significance of the CA, the scale and hierarchy of the LB internally, the wider basement or the stone rear planter with hidden air vents. However, the impact of the alterations to the lightwell would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Heritage balance

28. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that, when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to say that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification.
29. Given the scope of the works, I find the harm I have identified in this instance would be less than substantial and at the midpoint of this category. Nevertheless, this is of considerable importance and weight. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.
30. The works provide environmental benefits such as an overall commitment to reducing energy consumption, waste, carbon, as well as ecological

enhancements. However, considering the emphasis of the Framework on sustainability, it is not unusual for works to be designed to high environmental standards and to deliver ecological enhancements. For these reasons, I give moderate positive weight to these benefits.

31. There would also be some economic benefits derived from the construction phases, however, given the quantum of development these would carry limited positive weight. I have also been given no evidence that the heritage asset is at risk or that it would be dependent on this proposal.
32. In this case, the public benefits either alone or in combination would be insufficient to outweigh the great weight attached to the harm identified. Given the above I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the listed building.
33. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 210(a) of the Framework and conflict with the relevant provisions of Policies 38, 39 and 40 of Westminster City Plan which, amongst other things, seek to underpin statutory objectives while positively contributing to the local townscape and streetscape.

Other Matters

34. The appeals are accompanied by a Construction Method Statement confirming that the proposal can be achieved without affecting the stability and integrity of the LB and surrounding buildings. I note the construction will require separate consent under other regulations and the Council's Building Control Officer raises no objections in this regard. This aspect of the proposal would be acceptable at this stage.
35. The site is located within a Surface Water Management Zone. The appeals are supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and the Local Flood Authority as a consultee raise no technical objection to the proposals in respect to flooding and groundwater. In addition, conditions can be imposed to satisfactorily manage surface water and the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems. This element of the proposal would therefore be acceptable.
36. A Plant Noise Impact Assessment accompanies the appeals. I note that the Council's Environmental Health Officer was satisfied that the proposed plant would have an acceptable impact on noise and disturbance grounds, subject to conditions. I have carefully considered the submitted objections, however, given the content of the report and the consultation response from the Environmental Health Officer, I am satisfied that this aspect of the proposal would be acceptable.
37. The Appellant has also signed and submitted a pro-forma confirming they will comply with the Council's Code of Construction Practice for Basements. This sets out that a Construction Management Plan will be submitted to the Council which would include working hours, demolition and construction methodology, monitoring equipment, liaison with the local neighbourhood, signing up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme, a noise and vibration management plan, and an air quality dust management plan. Subject to a condition, I am satisfied that these details would be acceptable.
38. An Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan was submitted with the appeals. I note the Council raised no objection in this respect subject to tree

protection and landscaping conditions. I have considered the tree protection measures and proposed imposition of a landscaping condition, while a three-metre-tall Cherry tree to the front of the appeal property would be removed, any harm would be outweighed by a proposed replacement tree. I also note that wider landscaping could also be secured via condition. The proposal would be acceptable on these grounds.

39. Any future conversion back to two dwellings would be considered on its own merits at that point in time. Given I am dismissing the appeals there is no need for me to consider this matter any further.

Conclusion

40. For the reasons given above the appeals should be dismissed.

N Praine

INSPECTOR