



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2019

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/19/3229050

44a Martell Road, London SE21 8EE

- 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 Luke Bunce and Ms Rachael Parker against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref: 18/05052/FUL, dated 19 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the front boundary wall and the formation of a vehicular means of access (crossover) and hardstanding for the parking of a motor vehicle. (Ground Floor Flat).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the appeal form as it is more precise than that shown on the application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on
 - a) the character and appearance of the area, and
 - b) on-street parking stress.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises the front garden of a mid-terraced dwelling within a mainly residential area. The proposal would create an off-street parking space in the front garden.
5. Policy Q2 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2015) (LP) requires that development avoids compromising visual amenity. Policy Q5 of the LP specifies, amongst other things, that development should respond to positive aspects of the local context, including townscape/landscape character. Policy Q14 (LP) sets out, that car parking in front gardens would not be supported if, amongst other things, it harms visual amenity.

6. The street comprises dwellings of various architectural styles. Around a third of properties on Martell Road have off-street parking at the front of them. As such, the majority of front gardens along this street do not have car parking in them. The prevailing presence of front gardens free from vehicles provides relief from built-up elements and the collective mass of parked cars in the streetscene. Moreover, soft landscaping such as hedging and shrubs within front gardens, protected by low boundary walls and fencing, is a notable part of the street's character and distinctiveness. The above factors together contribute a distinctive garden character and spaciousness to the street.
7. The appeal site's front garden comprises a paved path, boundary vegetation, an area of bare ground and a low timber fence along its front boundary. The proposal would result in a hard-surfaced front garden area, with a car parking space open to the street. Proposed planters would have limited visual effect on the streetscene due to being at the rear of the front garden, behind the parking space. The proposal would reduce the spaciousness of the street and space for garden planting. Moreover, it would, in combination with some other off-street parking bays on the street, contribute to the cumulative erosion of verdant front garden character.
8. In conclusion, the proposal would harm the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area. As such, it would conflict with Policies Q2, Q5 and Q14 of the LP. The policy seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that development safeguards local environmental character.

Parking

9. Policy T6 of the LP requires, amongst other things, that development should not have unacceptable transport impacts, including cumulative impacts on on-street parking.
10. Much of the street does not have kerbside parking restrictions, whilst access to off-street parking spaces in some front gardens reduces kerbside parking space. At the time of my site visit, there was little spare capacity for on-street parking, albeit this was a 'snapshot' in time. The main parties describe 'heavy' parking stress in the area, and this appears to be so.
11. The site is within short walking distance of regular bus services on Robson Road, which run between Crystal Palace and Clapham Common, and connect with a number of railway stations. As such, there are realistic public transport options for residents of Martell Road, and this might help to address parking pressure in the area, longer term. However, the evidence above points to high parking demand without immediate prospect of its reduction.
12. I appreciate that the proposal would secure an off-street parking space for the appellant. However, it would lead to removal of kerbside parking space in front of the appeal property. As such, it is anticipated that the proposal would result in a net loss of parking capacity on Martell Road. It is recognised that the loss of capacity would be modest due to the scale of the proposal. Nonetheless, the proposal, in combination with access to other off-street parking spaces, would reduce the amount of kerbside parking space available to residents of the street. As such, it would exacerbate existing on-street parking stress, to the detriment of the living conditions of surrounding residents. This would be contrary to Policy T6 of the LP, which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that development has an acceptable impact on on-street parking.

Other Matters

13. I appreciate the appellant's view that as some other dwellings on Martell Road have space to the front where cars are parked off-street, the proposal would be fair and, as such, justifiable. Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider the proposal's effects on the character and appearance of the area and local parking stress. Having done so, I find that the harm identified above would outweigh the benefit of the proposed off-street parking space.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR