



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 October 2019

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/W/19/3235056 20 Wood Lane, Dartford DA2 7LR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Fairseat Estates against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/19/00738/FUL, dated 24 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing house, garage and shed and erection of three x 3 bed terraced dwellings incorporating habitable loft with front and rear dormer and associated parking and amenity space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development is taken from the appeal form rather than the application form as this more succinctly captures the nature of the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (a) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; (b) the adequacy of the parking arrangements in relation to parking capacity and highway safety; and (c) whether the development would undermine the Council's strategy for managing windfall developments in order to deliver housing in priority areas.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The proposal relates to the redevelopment of a relatively wide and deep plot on the southern side of Wood Lane, a cul-de-sac comprising a mixture of bungalows, detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The adjacent site to the east (no.22) is a large detached and extended two storey house, whilst to the west (no.16) is a semi-detached house enlarged by a large rear flat roof dormer and two small front dormers. To the rear of the site is Sinclair Way, a new development of small terraced houses. Land levels rise steadily to the east and Wood Lane has a junction with Green Street at its western end.
5. The proposed terrace would have a slight stagger and be set a little behind the frontage of the adjacent dwellings to enable the provision of 6 front garden parking spaces. Whilst there are other terraced houses in the road, these are

modest in size by comparison. The three large front dormers would result in the dwellings appearing as a three storey terrace in the street scene whereas the frontage to the majority of dwellings in Wood Lane are either single storey, two storey or two storey some with modest additions to the roof space. The proposal would result in a row of three bulky dwellings, that would be out of keeping with the character of development in the road.

6. The provision of 6 parking spaces, 2 for each house, would result in a large hard surfaced area leaving little room for soft landscaping. Whilst many properties in Wood Lane have frontage parking, the extent of hardstanding proposed and the width of the associated vehicle crossover extending across the entire site frontage would be uncharacteristic for the road. Although each house would have a long back garden, the front part of the site would nonetheless have a cramped and overbearing appearance with the proposed parking arrangements in association with the proposed building.
7. The proposal would thereby conflict with Policies DP2 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan (2017) (DDPP) which promote good design including in relation to the mass and roof form of development and in garden areas respecting the character of an area.
8. The appellant has referred to other nearby developments in support of the proposal. The redevelopment of the Fox & Hounds public house site at the lower end of the road relates to previously developed land in a different site context. A single infill dwelling has been constructed at 120 Coombfield Road, as a continuation of the line of dwellings to this side of Wood Lane beyond a footpath linking the two roads; this relates to a much smaller dwelling than those now proposed and the infill house respects the size, design and spacing of adjacent dwellings which the appeal proposal would fail to do.

Parking

9. Wood Lane varies in width being relatively wide in the central part enabling kerb side parking to both sides of the road but is narrower at its lower and top ends. Many dwellings in Wood Lane have some off-street parking but several others are dependent on on-street parking.
10. The proposed 2 spaces for each dwelling would satisfy the Council's parking requirements for the individual dwellings, but would not include any visitor parking, a requirement of the Councils Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2015) (SPD). Whilst in some circumstances this could be provided on-street, the wide vehicle crossover proposed would remove present on street parking availability outside the site. There is limited opportunity for on street parking in other parts of Wood Lane. Several local residents have submitted representations about present problems of on-street parking congestion, particularly at evenings and weekends. The proposal would be likely to aggravate these problems by generating additional demand for street parking spaces whilst reducing overall capacity. It would be likely to encourage indiscriminate on-street parking which would be prejudicial to highway safety and residents' amenity.
11. It would thereby be contrary to Policies DP3, DP4 and DP5 of the DDP, with Policy CS15 of the Dartford Core Strategy (2011) (DCS) and the SPD which collectively seek to manage the transport impacts of development and ensure there is not excessive pressure for on-street parking capacity.

12. The appellant has referred to the allowed appeal at 120 Coombfield Road in which the Inspector concluded that the lack of visitor parking would not be critical. However, that decision related to a single dwelling in a different road whereas the access to the current proposal for 3 dwellings would reduce present on street parking capacity. The appellant has also suggested that visitors could park on the road in front of the vehicle crossovers; whilst this could work informally with the agreement of householders, it would not be best practice in relation to highway safety and would not address the shortfall in capacity for other residents.

Planning balance

13. The Council can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. However, the net increase of two dwellings proposed would nonetheless make a small additional contribution towards the general need for additional housing and would be in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 59 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework to significantly boost the supply of homes and to make effective use of land in meeting the need for homes.
14. The Council consider the proposal to be a windfall development on garden land which does not constitute previously developed land. However, the proposal is for frontage development mostly on land comprising the present house and attached garage. A smaller part of the frontage on the western side has not been developed but nonetheless includes an access to a detached garage that would also be demolished for the proposed scheme. The garden land to the rear of the present dwelling would remain largely undeveloped. The infilling of the gap along the frontage would not have a significant adverse effect on the Council's strategy to safeguard the development of previously undeveloped greenfield garden land that might undermine its strategy to direct new development to appropriate sustainable locations. The proposal would not therefore conflict with the strategy set out in Policy CS1 of the DCS or with the maintenance of garden land set out in Policy DP7 of the DDPP.
15. The site is within a reasonably sustainable location with close access to a park, some local shops, a day nursery and a primary school. There are also buses in Green Street providing regular access to other services and local centres. The proposal would not therefore be contrary to Policy DP6 of the DDPP in relation to sustainable residential locations and would also satisfy some criteria set out in Policy CS10 of the DCS that guide the consideration of windfall sites.
16. However, having regard to the adverse effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and on on-street parking capacity in Wood Lane, the benefits of the net increase of two houses would not outweigh the disbenefits arising from the proposal. The development would thereby be contrary to Policy CS10 of the DCS.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR