
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2020

by K Winnard LL.B Hons Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/20/3251867

106 Old Park Ridings Southgate London N21 2EP

- 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 Mr and Mrs Graham and Maria Roberts against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 19/04310/HOU, received by the Council on 18 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of hardstanding in connection with vehicular access together with front boundary walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of hardstanding in connection with vehicular access together with front boundary walls at 106 Old Park Ridings Southgate London N21 2EP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/04310/HOU, received by the Council on 18 December 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: MDP GR/01B, MDP GR/02B, and MDP GR/03A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) highway safety and (ii) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area with particular reference to its Conservation Area status.

Reasons

Highway Safety

3. The appeal property is situated on a classified C road. Policy DMD46 of the Enfield Development Management Document (DMD) states that on busy classified roads planning permission for a new access will not normally be permitted. It further provides that vehicle crossovers and dropped kerbs allowing for off street parking will only be allowed subject to a number of set criteria identified within the policy at criteria a to h. The supporting text indicates that the provision of direct frontage crossovers onto busy roads can adversely affect traffic flow and road safety particularly when their cumulative impacts are taken into account.
4. The appeal property is set back from the road on the brow of a hill with a crossover leading to a substantial area of hard surfaced parking, large enough to accommodate more than one single parked vehicle. There were no obvious on street parking issues at the time of my visit and traffic was busy and moving fast. I noted that there were several properties within the vicinity of the appeal site which had "in and out" access arrangements.
5. I acknowledge that the appeal property already has the benefit of an existing access. There is however no indication that car parking or manoeuvres at the appeal site would increase as a result of the proposal. The introduction of an "in and out" arrangement by the provision of a second crossover would enable the appellants to drive in and out of the property in forward gear. At the present moment any reversing manoeuvres into/from the property are inevitably performed with restricted visibility given its location on the brow of the hill. The provision of a second crossover, albeit adding to the number of crossovers onto the road, would lead in my view to an improvement in highway safety and less congestion on the road. Whilst no specific pedestrian access from the footway is shown in the layout plans it seems to me that there is sufficient space within the site, even when vehicles are parked on the hardstanding, to ensure satisfactory pedestrian access to the front door of the appeal property.
6. In this location I do not consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact on highway nor pedestrian safety sufficient to justify a refusal of permission. Notwithstanding that the proposal would create an additional crossover, it would satisfy many of the criteria in Policy DMD46 of Enfield's Development Management Document (DMD). As such there is no material conflict with Policy DMD46 of the Enfield's Development Management Document nor the provisions within Enfield Core Strategy Policy CP24 (Road Network). Whilst reference is made by the Council to Policy 6.13 of the London Plan this refers to parking provision for new development.

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property is a detached property situated within the Grange Park Conservation Area (CA) where there is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework)

states that great weight should be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets, in this case the Conservation Area.

8. The CA Character Appraisal states that one of the key factors that gives the CA its special interest is "the tightly planned layout with houses in single occupation and a green setting of trees and gardens". A key issue identified as affecting the CA is parking in front gardens, described as being frequently intrusive with individual hard standings often too extensive, with very little planting and no boundary walls, so forming an unattractive setting for houses of good architectural character and a cumulative detrimental street effect. Old Park Ridings is identified as being one area within the CA where there has been a loss of traditional front boundary treatments and which has rarely been carried out with a regard for appearance or the retention of effective areas of planting.
9. The appeal property is set back from the road with one crossover entrance leading to a hardstanding. A low brick wall, with lawn behind, on the front boundary of the appeal property is in poor condition. It is unattractive and out of keeping with other boundary walls in the immediate vicinity. Other than the lawn, there is no planting of significance within the appeal site. There are examples in the vicinity of the appeal property of front gardens being used for car parking, many with "in and out" access arrangements and with planting behind attractive boundary walls.
10. I acknowledge that the proposal will involve the loss of lawn in this location, and that there has been a cumulative effect of the loss of front gardens, front garden walls and vegetation over time within the CA. However, the proposal would redesign the current frontage providing for the same amount of hard and soft landscaping within the appeal site as existing. In addition to the tarmac being replaced by pavements, the unattractive low level front boundary brick wall will be removed and replaced by a higher wall with planting behind which will be in keeping with neighbouring properties, so in my view, enhancing the appearance of the area. I note also the tree would now be retained.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed scheme would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the CA and would not be contrary to the provisions of section 72 in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. As such the proposal would comply with Policies DMD37, DMD44, and DMD46 in Enfield's Development Management Document and Enfield Core Policies 30 and 31 which require development to be appropriate and in keeping with the property, and the design not to be inappropriate in its context. The proposed scheme would not conflict with these policies. Local context and architectural quality would be duly respected as set out in Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Local Plan (2016). The proposal would preserve or enhance the qualities of the Conservation Area that contribute its heritage significance, and as such would not be contrary to Policy DMD 44, to Core Policy CP31, to London Plan Policy 7.6 and national planning policy.

Conditions

12. I have imposed conditions in respect of timescale and specifying the approved plans as this provides certainty. I have imposed a condition relating to

matching materials in the interest of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given and having taken all other matters into account, I allow the appeal as set out in the formal decision above.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR