
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 29 July 2021 by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/21/3273295

27 Grantham Road, Chiswick, London, W4 2RT

- 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 Simon Dalkin against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00499/27/P3, dated 1 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is the formation of a vehicular access at the front of 27 Grantham Road W4 2RT, including a dropped kerb, removal of section of existing wall, and installation of paving with suitable drainage to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, the parties have been provided with a further opportunity to make submissions in respect of the publication. Any comments which have been received have been addressed within the appeal decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effects of the development on highway safety, biodiversity, and the character and appearance of the street scene and wider Chiswick House Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

Highway Safety

5. The London Borough of Hounslow's Residential Crossovers and Off-Street Parking Policy (RCPP) (2016) requires vehicular crossovers to have pedestrian visibility splays of 2.4m by 2.4m, with no obstructions exceeding 600mm in height within these areas. It has not been demonstrated that the required visibility splays could be provided within land in the control of the appellant or

the highway authority, particularly given the proximity of a substantial tree in the pavement.

6. Therefore, it has not been demonstrated that adequate visibility for drivers entering or exiting the parking area could be provided. Consequently, there would be potential for harmful conflict between pedestrians using the footway and vehicles using the proposed access.
7. Furthermore, the proposed access would be constructed within the 'precautionary area' of the pavement tree, defined as 4 times the girth of the tree measured at 1.5m height in the RCPP document. Construction of the access therefore has the potential to affect the tree's root system, and consequently its stability and long-term health, particularly as there is already a vehicular access close to the trunk on the other side at No 25. No assessment has been carried out to demonstrate that the access could be constructed without harm to the tree and its stability. Therefore, a lack of risk to public safety cannot be assured.
8. Whilst there are many nearby examples of accesses, some in similar proximity to pavement trees, I have no details of how these came to be built, the visibility they provide or the method by which they were constructed, so they are not demonstrably comparable to the proposal before me.
9. Accordingly, the proposal would not be consistent with the Council's adopted policy on vehicle crossovers and would result in an unacceptable harm to highway safety. Therefore, it would conflict with Policy EC2 of the Local Plan 2015-2030 Volume One (LP) and the guidance in the RCPP.

Biodiversity

10. The proposal would only involve the loss of a small element of front boundary hedging and planting along the side boundary would remain. However, for the reasons set out above, the proposal has the potential to harm to the stability and long-term health of the pavement tree. It is a substantial specimen of considerable biodiversity value in this urban area, therefore harm to it would have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity in this area. It has not been demonstrated that the impact could be avoided, mitigated or compensated for.
11. As a result, the proposal would conflict with LP Policy GB7, which seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment of the borough.

Character and Appearance

12. Grantham Road is characterised by two storey Victorian terraced properties set back from the highway, the majority with parking to the front. Street trees soften the built form and give the street a verdant appearance.
13. The Chiswick House Conservation Area Appraisal (2021)(CAA) sets out that Chiswick House and Gardens and the surrounding residential area are of historical significance. The character of Grantham Road is defined by an unbroken ridgeline and homogeneity between the houses. Noted attractive features include timber porches and rear projecting closet wings.
14. The CAA considers the loss of front gardens and boundaries for off-street parking to be a threat to the CA, however the majority of properties along

Grantham Road have dropped kerbs and frontage parking, therefore this forms part of the existing prevailing character.

15. The Council's Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) seeks to resist the demolition of boundary walls where they form a continuous means of enclosure to a terrace or pair of dwellings. However, I saw that neither Nos 29 or 25 have any front wall, so the proposal would not affect an existing continuous frontage. In addition, the plans show that sections of the front wall to No 27, including the pedestrian gate, would remain. This would ensure that the site would not have a completely open frontage and would retain some sense of enclosure.
16. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not cause additional harm to the street scene and the CA and would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the CA as a whole. It would not therefore conflict with LP Policies CC1, CC2 or CC4 insofar as they seek to retain, promote and support high quality urban design and the natural environment, secure development that sensitively responds to an area's character and conserve and enhance the significance of the area's heritage. Moreover, there would be no conflict with the character aims of the SPD or the CAA.

Other Matters

17. I acknowledge the security benefits of off-street parking and the benefits of securing a designated parking space to the property, particularly given parking restrictions in the area. I also appreciate the appellant's intention to purchase an electric car, the charging of which would be more convenient on a driveway. However, these would be private benefits, and given the small scale of development I can only afford them limited weight. Given the importance attached to highway safety and biodiversity in national and local planning policies, this does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. While I have found no harm in respect of the street scene and CA, the proposal would harm highway safety and biodiversity. There are no material considerations that indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore recommend that the appeal should be refused.

B Phillips

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR