



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1st February 2022

by Megan Thomas Q.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Decision date: 8th MARCH 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/21/3289547

343 Blackfen Road, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9NJ

- 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 Mrs Maxine Coburn against the decision of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref.21/03156/FUL, dated 14 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the creation of a vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the free flow of traffic and highway safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached bungalow which at the time of my site visit had a front forecourt which had been covered in hardstanding and on which refuse bins were located. Its dimensions are, very approximately, 3.6m wide by 8.8m deep. The dwelling is situated on the northern side of Blackfen Road which is a busy classified road and is designated as a London Distributor Road within the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan road hierarchy (policy G18).
4. The road is also a bus route with buses running east and west along the road. There is a bus stop a short distance west of the appeal site on the northern side of the road. There is a pedestrian refuge island in the middle of the road partly in front of the appeal property. There are double yellow lines along the northern side of the road and also on the southern side, but some on-street parking is allowed on part of the southern side. There are residential properties on both sides of the road. Several dwellings have crossovers and off-road parking on the front forecourts of their properties.
5. The proposals are for a vehicle access and crossover to allow off-street vehicle parking. There would be a 1050mm high brick boundary wall along part of the front boundary with a concrete block-paved area behind and some soft planting on the eastern boundary. The area shown on the plans for parking could accommodate a parking space, however, I am not convinced that the proposal

would allow for a vehicle to be satisfactorily turned around so as to be able to re-join the highway in a forward direction. Given that the highway is a distributor road providing "through traffic movements and links to Strategic Roads" it is important to maintain the free flow of traffic along it avoiding delays and avoiding vehicles manoeuvring in ways which might compromise highway safety for pedestrians, cyclists or other vehicle users. Consequently, it is important to ensure off-road parking allows for vehicles to re-join the highway in a forward direction and also to avoid vehicles reversing from the highway into an off-road parking space.

6. Whilst there are many properties with off-road parking along this part of Blackfen Road, and it may be the case that some of these off-road parking spaces are too small to allow parked vehicles to re-join the road in a forward direction, the evidence submitted does not establish whether these have been given express planning permission or, if lawful, have become lawful through the passage of time. Notwithstanding that, it is not prudent to add a substandard access arrangement to this distributor road and not prudent to do so in this particular location.
7. I have borne in mind the difficulties of finding on-street parking close to the property given the number of dwellings in this busy urban area and I acknowledge the inconvenience of not routinely being able to park close to home. However, those factors are outweighed by the harm that would result from the proposal in this case.
8. I conclude therefore that the proposal would unduly harm the free flow of traffic and highway safety. It would be contrary to policy G18 of the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan (adopted 2004) and contrary to policy CS15 of the London Borough of Bexley Core Strategy 2012.

Conclusion

9. Having taken into account all representations made, for the reasons given above, I dismiss the appeal.

Megan Thomas Q.C.

INSPECTOR