



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/22/3294986
350 Blackfen Road, Sidcup DA15 9NY

- 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 Miss Nichola Daley against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 21/03358/FUL, dated 16 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'for drop kerbs and a vehicle cross over to footpath for a new driveway'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the safety and convenience of highway users.

Reasons

3. Blackfen Road, the A210, is a London Distributor Road ('LDR'), as classified by Policy G18 of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan 2004 ('UDP'). This policy seeks to manage the borough's roads according to their function.
4. The Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines ('DCG') provides further advice. It states that, other than Strategic Roads, LDRs are the most important for traffic. Limited access may be approved here in specific circumstances. These include that there is no alternative access available, a turning area can be provided within the property, and that it would not create a hazard likely to lead to an accident.
5. This part of Blackfen Road is subject to a 30mph limit, with an automated vehicle speed warning sign nearby. The immediate vicinity is not subject to yellow line restrictions and the central part of the highway opposite the site is covered by white chevrons. There are nearby road junctions, such as with Ramillies Road, which is served by a right hand lane when travelling east along Blackfen Road. The appellant notes that Blackfen Road is busy. It is also on a bus route. Many existing properties on the road have hard surfaced forecourts, often with dropped kerbs to the highway, although neither adjacent property has an access at the front onto the road.

6. As there would be insufficient space within the site to turn a car around, drivers would need to either reverse in or reverse out across the carriageway and the pavement, contrary to the guidance in the DCG. Visibility for drivers doing this would be significantly restricted by the potential presence of parked cars on the road either side of the proposed access and, for emerging drivers, by boundary features, particularly a hedgerow to the front of No 348.
7. In that context, the removal of one roadside space in front of the site, where vehicles could park parallel to the road without the need to perform such awkward manoeuvres, would not constitute a highway benefit. Indeed, given the limited visibility for drivers using the proposed access, and the traffic on this LDR, in my view such manoeuvres would significantly harm the safety and convenience of vehicles on the carriageway and of pedestrians using the pavement.
8. I have no details of the collisions on Blackfen Road referred to by the appellant, including their cause, so I cannot be certain that they would have been prevented if there had been off road parking. In any event, this scheme alone will not prevent all roadside parking.
9. For the reasons above, the scheme would conflict with UDP Policy G18, and with Bexley Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS15 which, at part 'k', sets out the need for a safe highway network with a free flow of traffic.
10. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's stance at paragraph 111 that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and it would conflict with the advice in the DCG.
11. I have no details of the planning history of the nearby dropped kerbs, some of which the appellant has photographed and marked on a plan. However, their presence does not change my view with regards the harm that this scheme would cause. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR