



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2022

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/22/3299332

**Vacant Land North West & Adjacent to 522, Sidcup Road (South End),
Mottingham, London**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant full planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Nicholas Carey of Denesway Developments Ltd against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/4434/F, dated 7 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is construction of three new single-storey starter homes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.
 - Whether the proposed development would provide an acceptable and inclusive standard of residential accommodation for future occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located within a prominent position along Sidcup Road, close to the traffic light junction with Court Road and is currently a vacant parcel of land which is surrounded by timber fencing. The surrounding area is largely residential although there are a number of commercial uses located nearby including the Public House and Petrol Filling Station on the opposite side of the dual carriageway.
4. At my site visit, I observed the properties located along Sidcup Road and Court Road and note that the properties comprise large two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings of a traditional appearance. The properties are set within generous but narrow plots. All these aspects combine to give a clear and consistent pattern of development in the area and the commercial uses nearby as well as the dual carriageway does not interrupt this pattern.
5. The proposed development would construct three single storey dwellings in a short terrace form which would be at odds with the surrounding properties and thus appearing as inconsistent with the established pattern of development.

6. The dwellings would be highly visible from Sidcup Road given their position and sitting close to the traffic light junction. The single storey element, together, with the short terrace form would appear overly prominent in comparison to other properties and would dominate the street scene despite the infill nature and appellant's assertion that the proposed development would appear as one large, detached bungalow.
7. The locality is not subject to any particular designation and whilst I accept that some change to the character of the area can be expected when making more effective use of land, development should still reflect the overall character of its setting. The proposed development would appear to be a stark addition in this particular location and would not integrate well with the existing built form despite changes made from earlier applications and would therefore be harmful to the wider streetscape.
8. On my site visit, I noted that the properties along Sidcup Road broadly align with one another although their position within their plots does vary where some sit slightly forward from their neighbours as demonstrated by No. 524 and No. 526. Additionally, the side elevation of Wood Acre House which neighbours the site sits closer to the pavement and therefore breaks the overall alignment when viewed from Sidcup Road. Whilst the proposed dwellings would project slightly forward of neighbouring property No. 522, they would not project forward from Wood Acre House and when viewed in context of the neighbouring properties and wider street scene, it would not be unacceptably harmful in this respect.
9. I conclude that although the forward setting of the properties from No. 522 would be acceptable, overall the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area contrary to Policy D3 of the London Plan and Policies H(c) and DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies which together, amongst other things, seek to enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing building types, forms and proportions.

Standard of accommodation

10. I note that the Council's Occupational Therapist previously raised concern in relation to compliance with the relevant standards relating to accessible and adaptable dwellings. I have considered the plans submitted along with the commitment from the appellant to comply with the relevant standards and in the absence of further comment on this specific application from the Council's Occupational Therapist, I am content that such matters could be dealt with via a planning condition requiring full details to be provided. Such a condition could be imposed were the appeal to be allowed.
11. I conclude that the proposed development would provide an acceptable and inclusive standard of residential accommodation for future occupiers and would comply with Policies D5 and D7 of the London Plan and Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies which together, amongst other things, seek to achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design.

Other Matters

12. The Council accept that at present they are only able to demonstrate a housing land supply of 3.1 years and therefore cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. This is a moderate shortfall. Consequently, because of the provisions of footnote 8, paragraph 11d)ii of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) should be applied. This states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
13. The Framework advises that the creation of high quality, sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It also advises that decisions should ensure development that is sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 219 of the Framework is clear that due weight should be given to existing policies according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
14. Policy D3 of the London Plan and Policies H(c) and DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies are generally consistent with the Framework and as such, the conflict between the proposal and the policies above should be given significant weight in this appeal.
15. Set against the harm identified, there would be limited social, economic and environmental benefits associated with the proposals and even taking into account the objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing, and the Council's housing land supply position, the modest contribution of three properties would make little difference to the overall supply of housing. Consequently, the adverse impacts identified above would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

16. Although matters relating to acceptable and inclusive standard of residential accommodation could be resolved by way of a planning condition, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area and thus conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework that individually or cumulatively outweigh this harm. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR