
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2024

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 8 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/23/3330049

131 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6JL

- 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 Ms T Ucar against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 23/1892/F, dated 7 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2023.
 - The development is a proposed car park area in association with No 131 Powis street retail use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - Whether additional car parking spaces are justified in this location
 - The effects of the proposal on the safety of drivers.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council's reasons for refusal includes a reference to the absence of any facility for charging electric vehicles within the proposal. It is accepted by both main parties that this could suitably be dealt with by a condition if the appeal were to succeed.
4. The Council refer to No 131 Powis Street as being a Grade II Listed Building, sitting within the Woolwich Conservation Area. The Council did not require an application for Listed Building Consent and its objections to the proposal make no reference to any effects on the Listed Building, its setting or the Conservation Area. I agree that there would be no effects on these designated Heritage assets and I do not propose to go further into these matters.
5. Within the appellants submitted statement the following request is made, *"Before determining the appeal we request that the planning inspectorate looks at the possibility of implementing conditions for the approval of the take away use."* However, no such proposal is before me and this did not form part of the application made to the Council by the appellant. Accordingly, I shall take no action in relation to this request.

Reasons

Whether additional car parking spaces are justified in this location

6. The appeal relates to a small rectangular piece of land which currently accommodates plants but appears untended. The site is located at the entrance to a larger car park. The site is separated from the building at No 131 Powis Street by a pedestrian walkway. It is located in the town centre, towards the edge of the retail centre of Woolwich. There is a similar rectangular area on the opposite side of the car park entrance.
7. Policy T2 of The London Plan (LP) states that development proposals should deliver patterns of land use that facilitate residents making shorter, regular trips by walking or cycling and that proposals should reduce the dominance of vehicles. It adds that car-free development should be the starting point for all development proposals in places that are well-connected by public transport. Policy IM4 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (CS) supports the development of an integrated and sustainable transport system that is extensive in coverage and meets the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors. It requires all development in the Borough to contribute to improved accessibility and safety and to reduce the use of the private car and the need to travel. It adds that development must not go above the maximum parking standards set out in The London Plan. Policy T6.3 of the LP states that in locations with a PTAL of 5-6, developments should be car free. The application site has a PTAL rating of 6a.
8. The appellant indicates that the proposed spaces would be for staff and patrons at their retail use. They state that the existing car parking on the adjacent site is limited in time and cost. It is also stated that the number of additional spaces would be very limited and their effects would be negligible.
9. From my assessment there is a clear conflict with Policy IM4 of the CS and Policy T6.3 of the LP which require car free developments in such locations. The area is very well served by public transport and, for users of private cars, a public car park is immediately adjacent to the site and the associated retail use. I consider that the proposed spaces would inevitably result in additional cars coming to the town centre. Within the context of the policies set out above, this would be unacceptable. The appellant indicates that the development would help to promote the business. In my view, if there were any such effects they would be small, due to the already convenient location of the premises and in any event, not sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the above policies.

The effects of the proposal on the safety of drivers

10. The proposed site of the 3 car parking spaces is immediately adjacent to the entrance/exit of the car park onto Powis Street. The Council and Transport for London (TfL) are concerned that vehicles undertaking manoeuvres to enter and leave the proposed spaces would come into conflict with other vehicles entering or leaving the car park. It is notable that such conflict would not occur at present due to the 2 green areas being present close to the entrance.
11. I consider that there is a likelihood that cars undertaking manoeuvres to enter or leave the proposed spaces would place them in conflict with a vehicle that is entering the car park. The attention of a driver of a car in the proposed spaces

would be on manoeuvring out of the space carefully rather than on a vehicle that was about to enter the car park. I consider that this would have a harmful effect on the safety of drivers, contrary to Policy T4 of the LP and Policy IM4 of the CS.

Conclusions

12. I have taken account of all other matters set out in the representations. I find that the proposal would result in an unjustified addition to car parking in an area with very good access to other forms of transport, contrary to development plan policies. There are no matters which are sufficient to outweigh that conflict. Consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

T Wood

INSPECTOR