

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2024

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/24/3339341

Land Adjacent to 77 Moordown, Plumstead, London SE18 3NA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Shkumbin Sufa against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 23/3431/F.
 - The development proposed is 'construction of two storey residential property to the side of No. 77 Moordown with associated landscaping works and external alterations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal submission includes amended versions of the 'Proposed Ground Floor Level' and 'Proposed First Floor Level' floor plans which have been revised to show dedicated storage space within the development. The Council comments that the scale bar on these plans is inconsistent with the stated scale, a point which has not been disputed by the appellant. However, this was also the case with the plans originally submitted with the application. The very minor revisions to show storage would not result in a substantial difference or fundamental change to the proposal and given the nature of the changes, I am satisfied that my consideration of the amended plans would not cause procedural unfairness to any party. I have therefore taken them into account.
3. The evidence before me includes details of a previous proposal for a dwelling on the site which was recently dismissed at appeal¹. I have had regard to this decision as a material consideration, although I have determined the appeal having regard to the individual merits of the development that is before me.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) whether or not living conditions for future occupiers of the development would be acceptable in respect of the provision of internal space and storage.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. Moordown and other residential streets near to the appeal site are predominantly characterised by semi-detached and terraced dwellings of

¹ Appeal ref APP/E5330/W/23/3320950

mostly similar scale and designs, typically including hipped roofs, which are positioned on steady building lines. Gardens are usually reasonably large, and while the terraced runs result in a fairly tight grain along much of the length of the streets, generous gaps between buildings set around junctions provides for notable and attractive spaciousness at intersections. The resulting general consistency in the pattern and appearance of development is distinctive and, in my view, contributes much to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The appeal proposes a dwelling on land to the side of 77 Moordown. Although a single-storey section would extend up to the side elevation of 79 Moordown, the dwelling would essentially appear as a detached property. This would stand out against the typical terraced and semi-detached dwellings in the vicinity, and the staggered front building line and unusual design of the roof including both hipped and gable sections would further contrast with the characteristic regular frontages and hipped roofs. In combination with the irregular angled footprint, the stepped building line and multi-section roof would further give the building an unwieldy, complex form and awkward appearance. Irrespective of the materials and fenestration design including a bay window, I find as a result that the dwelling would be appreciated as an uncharacteristic and highly incongruous feature.
7. Moreover, while No 77 currently sits forward of the front building line of No 79, part of the proposed dwelling would project even further forward, extending considerably beyond the established building line to the south. Given also the much closer proximity of the dwelling to No 79, the juxtaposition of the different building lines would be striking and visually jarring. The mass of the building projecting forward of No 79 would be imposing in views along Moordown from the south and I find that the dwelling would form a highly prominent and intrusive feature in the street scene.
8. In addition, the open appeal site currently makes a significant contribution to the spaciousness around the nearby roundabout junction which is characteristic of the area. The dwelling might be of similar overall scale to others nearby, but it would occupy much of the width of the plot with only modest separation to its boundaries to both sides. The resulting tight relationship would stand out against the generous retained spacing around other buildings on both this and other junctions locally and would cause the dwelling to appear unusually cramped in views from the street. I find as a result that there would be a significant and harmful erosion of spaciousness causing notable detriment to the character and appearance of the area.
9. My attention has been drawn to examples of development to the side of some other dwellings in the vicinity of the site. However, I saw significant space remaining between two-storey projections to the side of dwellings and the two-storey sections of their respective neighbours at each of 15 Ankerdine Crescent, 17 Ankerdine Crescent and 153 Donaldson Road; as well as between 54 Moordown and 52 Moordown. While these developments may have reduced open character around junctions, the effect is not therefore directly comparable to the appeal proposal where retained spacing to neighbouring dwellings would be considerably more limited.
10. Highlighting the relationship of the site with adjacent dwellings, the appellant asserts that the proposal is the most appropriate in this particular locational context. However, that is neither clear evidence that what is proposed would be

acceptable, nor a compelling reason to allow development that would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

11. For the reasons above, the development would be an unsympathetic and unduly prominent feature in the street scene and I conclude that there would be unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would accordingly conflict with Policies D3 and D4 of the London Plan 2021 ('the LP') and Policies DH1, H5 and H(c) of the Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 ('the CS') which together broadly seek good design and high quality development which responds positively to local distinctiveness and that maintains or enhances local character.

Living Conditions

12. When the Council considered the application, it determined that the proposed dwelling would not meet minimum standards for the provision of internal floor area and built in storage specified by Policy D6 of the LP. However, it has confirmed that this was predicated on calculations using measurements based on the scale bar shown on the submitted plans. When measured according to the stated scale of 1:100, the internal floor area would be consistent with the area specified by the appellant and would be adequate.
13. The inconsistency between the scale bar and stated scale of the plans is unfortunate and has evidently caused confusion. However, dimensions including internal areas are also annotated on the plans and I consider that the figured dimensions should take precedence in the event of any discrepancy.
14. Measured at the stated scale, the dwelling would comply with minimum internal floor area standards. The amended plans also now clearly show sufficient built-in storage could be provided. I therefore conclude that living conditions for future occupiers of the development would be acceptable in respect of the provision of internal space and storage and I find no conflict with Policy D6 of the LP or Policies H5 or DH1 of the CS insofar as they together broadly seek high quality housing and homes that are of adequate size and fit for purpose.

Planning Balance

15. Although I have found that living conditions for future occupiers of the development would be acceptable, this would not outweigh the harm that it would cause to the character and appearance of the area. I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole.
16. The Council advises that it is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing in accordance with requirements within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'), referring to a supply of 2.8 years. Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework is therefore relevant and indicates 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 the Framework taken as a whole.
17. The Framework identifies a need to significantly boost the supply of housing. It highlights that small and medium sized sites such as the appeal site can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and that development of windfall sites should be supported. It further supports use of suitable sites within existing settlements for homes as well as development that makes efficient use of under-utilised land. Policies GG2, H1 and H2 of the

LP include similar objectives seeking to increase housing supply and make the best use of land. Against these objectives and the significant shortfall in housing land supply, making effective use of the appeal site to provide a new dwelling is an important benefit that attracts significant weight, but the extent of the benefit is very limited given the small scale of the development.

18. Moreover, the Framework balances the objectives above against requirements seeking development that is sympathetic to local character and highlighting the importance of well-designed places. The proposal would be contrary to these requirements and would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. I give significant weight to this harm.
19. In my judgment, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the modest benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The proposal would not therefore benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the Framework. Nor are there material considerations which, applying section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 would be sufficient to justify a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR