



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2024

by K Townend BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/24/3343719

125-127 Crescent Road, Greenwich, Woolwich SE18 7AH

- 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 Mrs Harpriya Chana against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 23/3295/F.
 - The development proposed is construction of two storey dwellinghouse and associated works.
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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 character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises land to the rear of 125 & 127 Crescent Road and shares a boundary with Bloomfield Road. At the time of my visit the boundary to Bloomfield Road was a mix of brick wall and metal sheeting with a large pair of metal gates.
4. The area is residential in character with a mix of terraces, flats, and semi-detached houses. Crescent Road is tight-knit terrace housing either side of Bloomfield Road with the existing retail unit on the ground floor of the host properties. The houses on Crescent Road have long rear gardens. Bloomfield Road is a mix of terraces and blocks of flats with smaller rear gardens.
5. The houses along Crescent Road are all close to the edge of the pavement with short defensible spaces at the front. The buildings directly turning the corner of the junction of Crescent Road and Bloomfield Road are set at the back of pavement. However, the houses on Bloomfield Road are set further back from the road.
6. Albeit not in a Conservation Area nor near any Listed Buildings, any development of the site should seek to respect and reflect the character and appearance of the area. The removal of the metal sheeting along Bloomfield Road would be a positive enhancement to the area. However, the proposed dwelling would be built close to the edge of the pavement on Bloomfield Road. It would not be directly at the back of pavement, unlike the corner buildings,

but it would also not follow the built form of the houses on either Crescent Road or Bloomfield Road in terms of its position in relation to the road.

7. Due to the shallow depth of the site the proposal would sit further forward than any of the properties on Bloomfield Road. The dwelling would not follow the line of the road, but there would also be sections of the front elevation that would be very close to the road and sections which are set back. This would result in a dwelling that would have an incongruous layout that would be out of keeping with the other houses in the immediate area.
8. The proposed dwelling would also be substantially wider than any of the existing dwellings in the immediate area. Consequently, even though the proposal would provide a two-storey dwelling with a hipped roof and suitable materials it would not respond to the character and appearance of the other housing in the area.
9. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling, albeit providing a garden of a comparable size to other properties on Bloomfield Road, would not provide a comparable garden area to the houses on Crescent Road which have much longer rear gardens. Moreover, due to the shape and size of the plot the garden would be to the side and the dwelling would appear to occupy a large proportion of the appeal site and sit close to the front and rear boundaries of the site.
10. The layout and size of the proposed dwelling and the shape of the appeal plot would, therefore, be out of keeping with the built form of the surrounding area and would result in a dwelling which would appear at odds with the built context. That the height would not be higher than the neighbouring properties is only one factor in considering the scale, massing and overall character and appearance. The submitted 3D context view and street view images show that the dwelling would, by reason of being wider and further forward than any other house, be an incongruous addition to the street scene and would not reflect the character or appearance of the area even if the design picks up on cues from surrounding properties.
11. Policy H2 of the London Plan, March 2021 (the LonP) supports well-designed homes on small sites to meet London's housing need. However, in my judgement the appeal proposal would not be a well-designed home.
12. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies DH1 and H(c) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (the CS) which, taken together, require all developments to be of a high quality design and positively contribute to the improvement of both the built and natural environment through, amongst other matters, taking account of townscape, established layout and spatial character, and seek to ensure that infill development maintains the character of the area.
13. The proposal would also fail to comply with the requirements of Policies D3 and D4 of the LonP which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that all development positively responds to a site's context and local distinctiveness through, layout and form and seeks to ensure high quality designs.
14. For the same reasons, the proposal would not comply with the advice set out in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (the Urban Design Guide SPD), specifically the advice at

C.1.3 which requires infill development to be strongly linked to the character of the place and support the overall cohesion of the townscape. It would also not comply with the advice at C.2.5 which requires development within residential areas to respond appropriately to their context and enhance the overall existing character.

15. The proposal would also not comply with the advice at paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to ensure that development achieves high quality, well-designed, places that are visually attractive and maintain a strong sense of place.

Other Matters

16. The appellant seeks to argue that the CS is out of date quoting the age of the document and that regional and national policy has moved on since the adoption of the CS. However, irrespective of the age of the Policy the Council has confirmed that, at the time of the officer report, the housing land supply was only 2.6 years. Consequently, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework applies.
17. Policies DH1 and H(c) of the CS and Policies D3 and D4 of the LonP are the most relevant policies in considering the proposal. None of these policies seek to restrict new housing within Royal Greenwich and they are consistent with the Framework as a whole. As such I have given the conflict with these policies, identified above, significant weight in this appeal. Although the development may accord with other individual development plan policies the proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole.
18. The proposal would accord with paragraph 60 of the Framework which seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing. I also acknowledge there would be general social and economic benefits of providing one 2-bedroom dwelling, as supported by the Framework. Moreover, the proposal would be development on a small site, creating higher density development in an area which is well connected to public transport and, in that regard would comply with Policies H1 and H2 of the LonP and paragraph 70 of the Framework. It would also make effective use of the land in accordance with the guidance in the Framework and the LonP.
19. There would also be environmental benefits through the potential for passive heating, PV solar panels, energy efficiencies and water saving devices. However, in providing one additional property these economic, social, and environmental benefits are limited. Nevertheless, these benefits contribute positively and carry moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
20. There would be adverse environmental impacts in terms of the effect on the character and appearance of the area from the narrow depth of the plot and the width and position of the proposed dwelling on the plot. The proposal would result in an incongruous layout out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area. The development would, therefore, be contrary to paragraphs 131 and 135 of the Framework, which amongst other matters seek to secure well-designed and attractive places, promote good design, and maintain a strong sense of place. These environmental impacts are afforded significant weight.
21. For the above reasons, the adverse impacts of the proposed development 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.

22. That there are no objections from statutory consultees weighs neither for, nor against, the proposal.
23. The appellant has also referred to the proposal being to redevelop the site to provide a new home for an expanding family. However, I have not been given any compelling evidence of any overriding personal circumstances that would outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which would outweigh this. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Townend

INSPECTOR