



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2025

by **F P Tinsley MA (Hons) MBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/D/24/3357115

325 Leeds Road, WAKEFIELD, WF1 2JH

- 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 Ross Woodcock against the decision of Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 24/01323/FUL dated 2 August 2024, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2024.
 - The development is 'the removal of front boundary wall and formation of driveway to front of dwelling.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development as detailed on the decision notice rather than the planning application form because this more concisely and accurately describes the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on (a) the character and appearance of the area; and (b) highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The section of the Leeds Road A61 main arterial route nearest to the appeal site is mixed in character and accommodates a range of residential property types including detached, semi-detached and short terraces. The appeal site is in a central position within a terrace of six residential dwellings. The terrace retains several original intact architectural features typical of early twentieth century residential construction. This includes the provision of small private areas to the front of the dwellings, which along the roadside are enclosed by a low stone capped brick wall, in matching materials to the dwellings. This runs the length of the terrace, largely in its original form and clearly demarcates public and private space, and establishes the relationship of the terrace to the road. This composition provides a strong and coherent form of development that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposal is to remove the entirety of the section of the boundary wall to the front of the appeal site to facilitate vehicular access to the private area to enable

dedicated off-street parking. This area is currently hard landscaped and is slightly elevated above pavement level.

6. The proposal would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area in two distinct ways. In the first instance, the removal of this section of boundary wall would break up what is an integral feature of the terrace that is largely intact and in its original form. This would detract from the character and appearance of the terrace as a whole and wider area. I note the Wakefield Residential Design Guide (Part 2) Guidance for Householders (RDG) which reinforces that boundary treatments often strongly contribute to the character and appearance of an area. Paragraph 1.08.10 states *'Proposals to remove front boundary treatments and surface curtilage areas for parking are unlikely to be acceptable.'*
7. In addition, the parking of a vehicle in the space immediately in front of the dwelling, would undermine the deliberate relationship and separation of the buildings from the street. The resulting adverse visual impact would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the terrace and by extension, the character and appearance of the area. A parked car would be an incongruous visual feature which disrupts the rhythm of the private areas to the front of the dwellings, which are an integral feature of the terrace.
8. During my site visit I was able to look at properties in the vicinity of the appeal site identified by the appellant that benefit from off-street parking. The only terraced properties which have off-street parking are located at the end of terraces and these properties also usually have external access to the rear of the terrace. There are other, either detached or semi-detached properties, which do have direct access to the highway from dedicated parking areas. As such, these instances differ notably from the mid-terrace appeal dwelling.
9. I also saw several terraced properties to the south of the appeal site close to the petrol station where parking to the immediate front of the dwelling is occurring. It appears that here small enclosed private areas to the front of the dwellings have been completely removed and informal parking, on what is effectively an enlarged footpath, is taking place. These examples tend to reinforce my concerns in that they negatively impact on the quality of the street scene.
10. I have not been presented with any example of an instance where the Council has permitted vehicular access to a property located in a central position within the terrace such as is proposed. Furthermore, I did not witness any examples of such configuration during my site visit. Accordingly, these examples attract little weight in favour of the proposal.
11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area and thereby conflicts with policies SP1, SP23, LP56 and LP57 of the Wakefield District Local Plan 2036, adopted January 2024 (the LP). Amongst other things, these policies support sustainable development, good design and development that contributes to local distinctiveness and the character of the area. They also seeks to prevent development which is discordant with the style of the original dwelling or results in harm to the character of the area.

Highway Safety

12. Policy LP27 of the LP requires, amongst other things, that development provides suitable access whilst not presenting an unacceptable impact on highway safety. This accords with paragraphs 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
13. The proposal would result in vehicular access onto the Leeds Road, a busy category 'A' road. In addition, there is a bus stop very close to the site where passengers would be likely to wait for, and alight from buses. The dimensions of the parking area would not allow sufficient room to turn. Hence, reversing manoeuvres to either access or egress the site would be necessary, which in this context, would undermine the safety of bus users and other drivers.
14. The appellant's measurements indicate the length of the space would be 4.63m, which he contends would be longer than the average car. Nevertheless, the Council's Street Design Guide recommends that external domestic parking spaces should measure a minimum of 2.5m by 5m. The proposal falls short of this guidance. It is foreseeable that should future occupants have a larger than average car, then when occupying the space it could overhang the footway presenting an obstacle to pedestrians and those approaching the bus stop. As such, it would not be a suitable access in this respect.
15. Moreover, it is not shown that adequate visibility would be possible at the site. My site visit indicated that the proximity of the bus stop and nearby on street parking would present difficulties in this respect. The appellant indicates that visibility would rely in part upon seeing through glazed panels of the bus shelter. Even if I were to accept that, there is no guarantee the panels will remain transparent. In any event, the structure of the bus stop presents an obstacle, as could waiting passengers. Furthermore, buses regularly stop at this location. Overall, I am not assured that the available visibility when accessing or egressing the appeal site would be safe, rather the opposite.
16. The proposed access would displace an existing on street parking space. Representations made raise general concerns about the availability of such spaces to local residents. However, the impact would be modest, and unlikely to directly cause highway safety concerns.
17. Nevertheless, taking these factors together, I find the proposal would unacceptably undermine highway safety contrary to policy LP27 of the LP.

Other Matters

18. The proposal would result in some benefits including allowing the appellant to conveniently charge an electric vehicle, which would broadly align with the Councils 'green initiatives.' However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified above to the character and appearance of the area and to highway safety and the safe functioning of the surrounding highway network.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

F P Tinsley

INSPECTOR