



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 March 2025

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/24/3357470

57 Jason Walk, Eltham, London, SE9 3DQ

- 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 Mr Iljan Dushaj against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/2566/HD.
 - The development proposed is the partial removal of the front wall, the construction of a paved driveway and a dropped kerb from the street to the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the locality and b) encouragement for the reduction of car use.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a one and two storey end of terraced house set on an angle appreciably removed from the highway by a considerable patch of grass which is largely mirrored on other parts of this wide corner. The locality is of established residential character and has a pleasing appearance not least due to characteristic wide grass verges and open areas lying to the front of well-designed traditional homes and the main footways.
 4. The proposal is as described above and amongst other works would incorporate a car route to the house with a length of over 10 metres and a dropped kerb 3 metres wide. To my mind the concrete dropped kerb and the lengthy route to the house, even using open structure concrete or netting such that it would be in part planted with grass, would be detrimental to the pleasing uninterrupted green scene which is presently in place. This patch of grass would be, to a degree, carved-up and its visual quality would be diminished and it would no longer read so comfortably alongside the other comparable grass areas. The planned works would create a permanent scar, and the scene would become incongruous and uncharacteristic in these open surrounds; the vehicular approach to the house would look contrived and out of place.
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5. In all the circumstances the proposed development overall would be harmful to the character and appearance of this locality; the scheme would represent inappropriate urban design and layout for this context.
6. Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) (LP) and Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (CS) have relevance to the case. Taken together, and amongst other matters, they seek to ensure that development is of high-quality design, sympathetic to its surroundings and integrating in the streetscene, suitable in form for its context, and protective of visual amenity. This is reflected in the advice and objectives of the Councils Urban Design Guidance SPD (2023) (SPD) which generally does not support new driveways albeit that document cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the relevant development plan policies and the pertinent aims of the SPD.

Car Usage

7. The Council is concerned that a new vehicle crossover and driveway would reduce the likelihood of success in the targeted 'Healthy Streets' aim to shift to travel by foot, cycle or public transport because it would encourage car use. I can appreciate that this would be a very valid argument in many cases across the city. However, in this limited instance, given the nature and relatively poor accessibility of the estate, and the wide spread availability of free, convenient, well-lit, readily available, and surveillance at reasonable levels, on-street parking, I am not persuaded that on-plot parking would measurably either increase greater likelihood of car ownership or its amount of day-to-day use. There is also an argument that in this instance it might encourage EV usage.
8. LP Policies T1, T2 and T6 and CS Policies IM4 and IM(c) are pertinent. Taken together, and amongst other matters, they aim to; reduce car use generally with a sustainable travel focus; facilitate the 2041 strategic target of 80% of all trips in London to be made by foot, cycle or public transport; promote 'Healthy Streets'; and restrict car parking, having regard to public transport accessibility. I conclude that the appeal proposal would not run contrary to these policies.

Other matters

9. I understand the case for the need for a car for this household and the limitations of public transport locally. I appreciate that parking on-plot would add to convenience, and protection of the car from damage or theft. It would reduce the demands of local on-street parking although this would only be by one vehicle, and I am not persuaded by what I saw that this area is subject to very great parking stress, and I noted that it is very lightly managed.
10. I viewed other examples of driveways and use of grass net or equivalents drawn to my attention, and others I noticed locally, but found none to be directly comparable positionally to this proposal. Furthermore, I was not always convinced that grass net type products, as used, offered the same visual qualities as untraversed grass, and I would not use those examples as a benchmark for good design which should necessarily be replicated. In any event I must assess this proposal on its own merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant, but these matters do not

outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to one of the main issues identified above.

11. The National Planning Policy Framework has been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not impact upon the aim to reduce the use of cars but would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR