



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2025

by **J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/25/3360405

174 Vicarage Farm Road, Hounslow, TW5 0AG

- 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 Asha Adan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/2996.
 - The development proposed is described as 'I am applying for a dropped kerb and I live on a classified road which requires me to apply for planning permission in support of my crossover application to Hounslow Highways who will be undertaking the work'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

- The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on highway safety and on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Highway safety

2. The appeal concerns a two storey, terraced dwelling, located in a road comprising similar dwellings. The proposal is for a dropped kerb to facilitate access to a parking space in the frontage of the dwelling.
3. The area to the front of the dwelling is hardsurfaced and at the time of my site visit, a car was parking to the front of the dwelling in a position parallel with the road. Several other dwellings in the same row of houses have dropped kerbs onto Vicarage Farm Road. I observed that Vicarage Farm Road was subject to a 20mph speed limit and was moderately busy with some pedestrians using the pavement. The site is close to the entrance to Springwell Junior School and I acknowledge that at certain times of the day the footpath is likely to be busier as parents and children approach and leave the school.
4. Policy EC2 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (2015) (LP) seeks a more sustainable local travel network that maximises opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport, reduces congestion, improves the public realm and improves health and well-being. Amongst other matters, it requires proposals for vehicle crossovers to be consistent with the Council's adopted policy on vehicle crossovers.

5. The Council's Residential Crossovers and Off-Street Parking Policy (October 2016) ('residential crossover guidance') provides detailed guidance on the design of crossovers. Whilst not forming part of the statutory development plan, I consider that this document provides useful guidance on the acceptability of vehicular crossovers in the Borough.
6. The frontage of the site is currently open, with no enclosure along the southern side boundary and a low open slatted fence to the north. Whilst no visibility splays are shown on any of the submitted drawings, based on my observations, pedestrian visibility splays of 2.4m x 2.4m at the back of the footway and on both sides of the crossover are likely to be achievable.
7. However, the proposed crossover fails to comply with the Council's residential crossover guidance in a number of respects. The plan which accompanied the original planning application fails to show the projecting bay window to the front of the dwelling and I cannot be sure that the overall dimensions shown on the drawing reflect my observations at my site visit. In any event, the depth of the parking space would fall short of the Council's standards set out in the residential crossover guide which are aimed at ensuring that vehicles do not overhang any part of the pavement, thereby potentially causing danger and inconvenience to pedestrians and other road users. This is of particular concern given the proximity of the site to the nearby school and the likely level of usage of the pavement.
8. Furthermore, the guidance also stipulates that a minimum level footway of 1.2 metres must be provided between neighbouring crossovers to provide a refuge for a person in a wheelchair or a parent with a buggy, for example. As the adjoining dwelling, 176 Vicarage Farm Road also has a crossover to the front, the proposal is unlikely to comply with this guidance. This could be hazardous for users of the footpath particularly considering the proximity of the site to the nearby school. It has also not been demonstrated that a 1.2m wide clear path to the front door of the property would be provided in accordance with the guidance to ensure safe access to the dwelling for all users.
9. Whilst I acknowledge that the frontage of the appeal property is already used for parking, this would not justify a formal crossover in this location. I acknowledge the presence of crossovers to the front of several of the adjacent dwellings, including at Nos 170, 172, 176 and 178 Vicarage Farm Road. However, I have not been provided with any evidence as to how long these have been in existence or indeed, whether they benefit from planning permission. In any event, I am required to determine the appeal on its own merits.
10. I acknowledge that the access would serve a single dwelling and associated vehicle movements would be relatively modest and at slow speed. The appellant also states that there have been no recorded incidents involving existing vehicle accesses. However, these considerations do not outweigh my findings set out above.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal fails to demonstrate that highway safety would not be prejudiced by the proposal. It would be contrary to Policy EC2 of the LP and the adopted Residential Crossovers and Off-street Parking Policy which together seek to ensure that road and pedestrian safety is not adversely affected by development proposals.

12. The Council also refer to Policy T6.1 of the London Plan (2021) in their refusal reasons. However, as this policy relates more to car parking standards rather than highway safety issues, it is of limited relevance.

Character and appearance

13. Policy GB7 of the LP seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's natural environment and biodiversity. Policy SC7 of the LP seeks, amongst other matters, to ensure development proposals maintain the character of the general street scene. The Council's Residential Extensions Guidelines SPD and the residential crossover guidance require that the area of hardstanding should be no more than is necessary to meet its functional need and should allow for areas of landscaping.
14. The area to the front of the existing dwelling is currently dominated by hardsurfacing, with no provision of soft landscaping. This is consistent with the character and appearance of adjoining properties which are similarly devoid of soft landscaping. In this particular case, the provision of a dropped kerb would not have any additional adverse effect on the landscape quality of the site or the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
15. Therefore, in this respect, the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and would not conflict with Policies GB7 and SC7 of the LP, the SPD or the crossover guidance.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR