
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by **K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/24/3354209

118 Whitchurch Gardens, Edgware, Harrow HA8 6PB

- 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 Iosif Utale against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref is PL/0871/24.
 - The development proposed is to demolish existing 2-bedroom bungalow and the creation of 2 semi-detached 3-bedroom dwellings.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the determination of this application, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 12 December 2024 and updated it on 7 February 2025. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended. As a result, I have not sought further submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by taking this approach.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - Whether the proposed development would provide adequate, car parking, cycle parking, and pedestrian access; and
 - Whether the proposed development would provide adequate refuse storage and servicing.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a detached, single storey dwelling with off-street parking to the front of the property and a garden to the rear. The surrounding area is largely suburban in character and consists of a mix of mostly detached, with some semi-detached dwellings of differing architectural styles and appearances.

5. Although differing in their appearance, there is consistency in terms of set-back distances, and in the sense of openness between the existing plots. As a result, the prevailing character of the area is one of suburban development, with the spaces and gaps between the dwellings being an important feature.
6. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing bungalow and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The proposed dwellings would be two and a half storeys, providing three bedrooms and finished in white render with a dual-pitched roof and central gable design feature to the front elevation. The Council has not raised any specific concerns in relation to the use of materials and based on the evidence before me I see no reason to disagree.
7. Policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan, adopted 2013 (the DMP) states that all development proposals must achieve a high standard of design and layout. It further states that proposals which fail to achieve a high standard of design and layout, or which are detrimental to local character and appearance, will be resisted.
8. The proposed dwellings would occupy the whole width of the site, leaving no gaps between the proposed development at the side boundaries of the site. This would be at odds with the established character of the area, which is typically characterised by detached buildings set within spacious plots, and buildings which are set in from the side boundaries. There would also be very little space between the proposed development and neighbouring dwellings, which would result in a cramped appearance, indicative of overdevelopment.
9. The proposed dwellings would each measure approximately 5.4 metres wide, which would appear much narrower than the majority of dwellings in the surrounding area. Whilst my attention has been drawn to examples of narrower properties found on Whitchurch Gardens, and I was able to observe these during my site visit, none of these examples appeared as narrow as the proposed development would, nor do I consider these examples are reflective of the predominant character of the wider area.
10. Furthermore, where I did observe examples of semi-detached dwellings, these generally exhibited similar characteristics to the detached dwellings, by being set away from side boundaries retaining the gaps between plots. In this particular case, the proposed development, would by virtue of its narrow appearance and proximity to side boundaries introduce a form of development which would not respond positively to the surrounding area.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Thus, it would be contrary to Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy, adopted February 2012, Policy DM1 of the DMP and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021, which collectively require development proposals to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local context and distinctiveness through layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.

Access and Parking Provision

12. Policy T6 of the London Plan 2021 states that car parking should be restricted in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity.

The appeal site is within a location with a PTAL rating of 1b, meaning that access to public transport is poor.

13. Policy T6.1 of the London Plan 2021 states that new residential development should not exceed the maximum parking standards set out in Table 10.3. In this particular case, the maximum parking standards per dwelling located in 'Outer London' and in an area with a PTAL rating of 0-1 is up to 1.5 spaces per dwelling.
14. The submitted plans indicate that two parking spaces would be provided for each dwelling, these would be located to the front of the proposed dwellings. As a result, the front garden would be mostly hardstanding with permeable paving and a small amount of soft landscaping. Due to the limited width of the appeal site and of space to the front of the proposed dwellings, it would seem unlikely that four cars would be able to park here safely. Nonetheless, the provision of this number of spaces would exceed the maximum parking standards set out in Policy T6 of the London Plan and would consequently encourage the use of private motor vehicles.
15. In terms of cycle parking provision, each of the proposed dwellings would be expected to provide two cycle spaces. The submitted plans indicate that these would be located in the rear gardens. However, no specific details have been provided. Nonetheless, in the event that I am minded to allow the appeal I am satisfied that this could be secured by imposition of a planning condition requiring further details of the cycle parking provision to be submitted.
16. As noted above, the appeal site benefits from existing access and off-street parking provision. There are two existing access points, each with vehicle crossovers providing access to the off-street parking and also pedestrian access to the site. The appellant states there will be no change to these access points. Therefore, whilst I accept that limited information has been provided to demonstrate how the site will be accessed once the development is completed, I am satisfied based on the evidence before me that there would be adequate pedestrian access. Therefore, I find that the proposed development would not be harmful in this regard.
17. Consequently, whilst I have found that the proposal, would provide adequate pedestrian access and subject to the imposition of a suitably worded planning condition, would be capable of providing an acceptable level of cycle parking, it would nevertheless not provide an acceptable level of vehicle parking. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies T6 and T6.1 of the London Plan 2021, which states that new residential development should not exceed the maximum parking standards.

Refuse

18. Policy DM45 of the DMP requires all proposals to make on-site provision for general waste, the separation of recyclable materials and the collection of organic material for composting. The on-site provision must provide satisfactory storage volume to meet the general, recycling, and organic waste material arising from the site.
19. The submitted plans indicate that bin stores would be located within the front garden area. Whilst the Council states that this provision would be insufficient, it has not stated what level of provision would be required. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not considered this matter further.

In any event, I am satisfied that this could be addressed by imposition of a planning condition requiring further details of the waste storage provision to be submitted.

Other Matters

20. I have found no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment in relation to the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring properties and whether the proposal would provide a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers. However, the absence of harm in respect of these matters is a neutral matter which neither weighs for or against the proposed development.
21. The appellant states that the most recent Housing Land Supply Position Statement was prepared by the Council in 2017. Nonetheless, whilst I have not been provided with an updated position by either of the main parties, the Housing Delivery Test results for 2023¹ indicates that the Council is delivering 101% of its housing requirement.
22. The proposed development would involve the creation of an additional dwelling would support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and it would be delivered on a small site, making an efficient use of the land. However, these benefits would be limited by virtue of the small-scale of development.
23. For the reasons set out above, I have found that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and would exceed maximum parking standards. Consequently, even if there is a shortfall in housing supply, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

24. For the above reasons, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight that indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR

¹ Published 12 December 2024