
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 March 2025

by **C Housden BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/24/3355676

40 Fen Grove, Sidcup, Bexley DA15 8QN

- 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 L Boyd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application ref is 24/01203/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “proposed new 2 person 1 bedroom bungalow to the rear garden of 40 Fen Grove”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the proposed development differs between the application form and the decision notice. In the interest of clarity, I have used the description of development from the application form in the banner heading of my decision which adequately describes the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises part of the garden area of 40 Fen Grove (No 40). The garden is currently flat and rectangular, extending vertically away from No 40 and is adjacent to Ronaldstone Road. The appeal proposal comprises sub-dividing the garden of No 40 and the erection of a single storey L-shaped detached dwelling.
5. The proposed dwelling would have a frontage onto Ronaldstone Road which primarily comprises two storey properties with common architectural features, arranged in a regular pattern, with a predominantly consistent linear building line on both sides of the road. There is also a pair of semi-detached bungalow properties adjacent to the appeal site which also follow the established linear building line. There is a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties within the area.
6. Much of the bulk and mass of the proposed dwelling would be situated in front of the building line along Ronaldstone Road. Furthermore, properties within the area have longer rectangular shaped plots with a vertical emphasis, however, the plot of the appeal site would be shallow with a horizontal emphasis. As such, the appeal proposal would appear contrary to, and out of keeping with, the established pattern of development.

7. Furthermore, whilst the proposed dwelling would be set off the boundaries of the plot, given the overall size of the plot, combined with its shallow depth and the requirement to situate the limited garden to the side of the property rather than the rear, the proposed dwelling would also appear as harmful over development of the plot.
8. The appellant suggests that the path which separates No 51 Ronaldstone Road (No 51) and the appeal site represents a point of transition within the streetscene, and that aligning the lowest part of the proposed dwelling with the front of No 51 creates a link and transition within the streetscene. The appellant also highlights that the building line along Ronaldstone Road has already been brought forward due to the garage extension at No 40 Fen Grove.
9. However, I do not consider that the proposed property would be viewed as a continuation and point of transition of the adjacent bungalows, rather it would appear as a prominent addition to the streetscene situated ahead of the established building line. Furthermore, in my view the extension at No 40 reads as part of the Fen Grove streetscene rather than as part of Ronaldstone Road and does not bring forward the legible building line of Ronaldstone Road in this regard. Therefore, in my view, the proposed dwelling would appear contrary to the pattern of development.
10. Whilst I note that the design of the proposed dwelling has taken influence from other properties within the streetscene and would introduce landscaping features along Ronaldstone Road, this does not justify the harm that I have found in relation to the above.
11. Therefore, for the reasons that I have given, I find that the appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As a result, the appeal proposal would be contrary to Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) and Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021). These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development takes a design-led approach to deliver development of a high-quality design that contributes positively to the character of the area and streetscene.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has drawn my attention to the property located on the opposite side of the road at 56 Ronaldstone Road (No 56). Whilst I do not have the specific details of this permission and the basis on how it was granted, it is clear to me the differences between this property and the appeal proposal. The property at No 56 is two storey, built along the established building line of Ronaldstone Road and set in a plot with a horizontal emphasis. As such, it is not directly comparable to the appeal scheme before me. In any case, the existence of this property does not diminish the specific harm that I have identified in relation to the appeal scheme.
13. The appellant has referenced that the benefits of the scheme include an improvement for biodiversity and the efficient use of the appeal site, to deliver housing through incremental densification on a windfall site through positive and proactive planning, which is supported by the London Plan.
14. Given the appeal proposal would make a small contribution of a single dwelling to the Council's supply, the benefits in this instance, would carry limited weight in favour of the appeal.

15. Conversely, I have identified that the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan in relation to the impact on the character and appearance of the area. This is a matter of significant weight against granting planning permission.
16. Given that the proposal would not accord with the development plan, in this case, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework would not apply.

Conclusion

17. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Housden

INSPECTOR