



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2025

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/25/3366557

61 Bridgewater Road, Wembley HA0 1AQ

- 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 S Carsam against the decision of the Council to the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref is 24/3694.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed dropped kerb and vehicular crossover, 1x car parking space, alterations to front boundary wall, alterations to hard and soft landscaping including new retaining wall in front garden and cycle and refuse storage to front garden of dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety. The second main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. Bridgewater Road (A4005), is a busy distributor road between the North Circular Gyratory at Hanger Lane and the southern parts of Harrow. In the vicinity of the appeal site the highway is flanked by terraced houses which are set back from the highway behind modest sized front gardens. The gardens on one side of the road, which includes the appeal site, sit at a lower level to the highway, whilst those on the other side of the road sit at a higher level.
4. On the southwestern side of the highway is a continuous layby which is separated from the pavement by a wide grass verge. On the opposite side there is a mixture of parking bays cut into the grass verge, as well as within the carriageway. There are also crossovers on both sides of the road which serve parking spaces within front gardens.
5. Policies DMP1, BT2 and BT4 of the London Borough of Brent - Brent Local Plan (LP), state that access for parking, manoeuvring and servicing should be satisfactory and should not have an adverse impact on the movement network. Proposals should not add to on-street parking demand on heavily parked streets and no more than one on-street parking space should be lost. Similarly, the Brent Domestic Vehicle Crossover Policy (2018) (DVFCP), advises that in considering proposals for crossovers the Highway Authority will have regard to the need to ensure the use of the proposed crossover would be safe; facilitate the passage of vehicular traffic on the highway network; and maintain safe pedestrian passage. Section 3.10 of Brent's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2025 (SPD), has similar objectives.

6. The proposed crossover would be three metres wide and would be sited part way along the existing layby. Whilst the appellant has stated that the proposal would only result in the loss of one parking space, no details have been submitted to demonstrate this. The Council considers that the proposed crossover would result in the loss of two or three spaces. Having regard to the proposed levels changes within the parking bay to form the crossover I am concerned that the proposal would result in the loss of at least two parking spaces. This would unacceptably add to the pressure for on-street parking spaces along this part of Bridgewater Road, which would further inhibit the free and safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic along a busy designated strategic road. For this reason, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
7. The appellant has not submitted any figures relating to the change in levels between the carriageway and the pavement, or the resultant gradient of the proposed crossover. The council has referred to a fall of some 0.85 metres resulting in a 10° gradient. This is not consistent with the submitted drawing and from my site visit I am not convinced the change in levels is 0.85 metres. Without precise dimensions it is not possible to accurately assess the resultant gradient and its impact on highway safety. This is an important factor as the steeper the gradient the more it inhibits both vehicular and pedestrian visibility from the vehicle on the crossover and visibility of that vehicle from Bridgewater Road.
8. Given the nature of these highway safety concerns they are not something that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
9. I conclude on the first main issue that on the basis of the evidence submitted the appellant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed crossover would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Accordingly, it would conflict with LP Policies DMP1, BT2 & BT4, the DVFCP and the SPD.

Character and appearance

10. As acknowledged by the Council the dimensions of the proposed on-site parking space are satisfactory and by raising the level of the front garden the parking space would be the same height as the pavement. Approximately 30% of the front garden would be soft landscaped and whilst this would meet the requirement set out in the Brent Domestic Vehicle Crossover Policy (2018) (DVFCP), it would be below the 50% sought in LP Policy BT2 and Section 3.10 of the SPD. This higher percentage is sought for both drainage and landscape reasons.
11. With the proposal the amount of hard surfacing within the front garden would not differ significantly from the existing. It would be comparable to the on-site parking space and associated front garden layout at 53 Bridgewater Road (No.53), which was approved by the council in 2023. However, whilst the approved crossover to the front of No.53 was 2.6 metres wide, the proposed crossover would be three metres wide and so would result in the loss of a larger area of grass verge.
12. Given the importance of the grass verges in softening the appearance of the street scene, coupled with the level of hard surfacing within the front garden, the proposal would have an unduly hard and unattractive impact on the street scene. This would be contrary to LP Policies BT2, BT4 and DMP1 which collectively require 50% coverage of front gardens to be soft landscaped and to be visually acceptable having regard to highway verges.
13. I am less concerned about drainage as the level of hard surfacing within the front garden would not change significantly and the proposal includes an Acodrain channel at the side of the parking space.

14. The council has stated that the proposal would conflict with Section 18 of the DVFCP, which prohibits new crossovers across grass verges of more than three metres in width. Whilst historically the verge was four metres in width it was altered to provide on-street parking spaces. The current verge is not more than three metres and so in this respect the proposal complies with Section 8 of the DVFCP.
15. For these reasons I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the street scene. It would conflict with LP Policies DMP1, BT2 & BT4, the DVFCP and the SPD.

Other matters

16. Concern has been expressed that the use of the proposed crossover would lead to light pollution. Due to the elevated nature of the proposed parking space car lights would potentially shine into the ground floor front windows of the appeal dwelling and the adjacent dwellings. However, this could be addressed by soft planting within the soft landscaped area to the rear and side of the parking space. This is a matter that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of a planning condition. Similarly details for the proposed retaining wall and hard surfacing materials could be dealt with by condition.
17. Concern has also been expressed that existing crossovers are used for parking and that they overhang and obstruct the pavement. This is a matter that could be addressed under other legislation.

Conclusion

18. Whilst I have found in favour of the appellant on some points the conclusions on the main issues amount to compelling reasons for dismissing this appeal.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR