



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/D/25/3365271

5 Forest Road, Forest Gate, Newham, London E7 0DN

- 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 Spencer Wilton against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref is 25/00207/HH.
 - The development proposed is the removal of the existing gate, brick wall and hedge and installation of a secure, purpose-built bicycle storage unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of the existing gate, brick wall and hedge and installation of a secure, purpose-built bicycle storage unit at 5 Forest Road, Forest Gate, Newham, London E7 0DN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00207/HH, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: Site Location Plan at Scale 1:1250, Drg No 00BB-GA100-01 showing '*Existing Front Elevation*' and '*Proposed Front Elevation*', Drg No 00BB-GA100-01 showing '*01 Plan*', Drg No 00BB-GA100-01 showing '*Proposed Front Elevation*' and '*Proposed Side Elevation*', and Drg No 00BB-GA100-01 showing '*01 Plan*', '*02 Elevation*', '*03 Elevation*' and '*04 Visualisation*'.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application form contained a lengthy description of the proposed works. The Council's decision notice described the proposal simply as '*Alteration to the front garden and boundary walls*'. My formal decision, along with the banner heading above, uses a distilled version of the words used on the application form, which appropriately describe the entirety of the proposed works.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the street scene and upon pedestrian safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, mid-terraced dwelling within a residential neighbourhood containing broadly similar style and aged properties set behind modest and shallow front gardens. The dwellings within the terrace are fairly uniform in appearance with attractive bay features and original detailing largely maintained. The Council has described a consistent and coherent front boundary treatment along Forest Road. I disagree. Whilst there is a consistent alignment to the enclosures along the back edges of the pavements, their appearances vary considerably. Most are low rise, but there is no uniform height or choice of materials. Where brick walls exist the materials palette is varied and few match the traditional brick of the host dwelling. Elsewhere boundaries display a random mix of render, integrated railings or wooden fence panels, concrete pilasters or blocks, whilst other still have hedgerow or dense vegetation or else are entirely open. I observed little in this regard that could reasonably be described as cohesive.
5. At the time of my visit, the frontage to No 5 was bound by a low brick wall with taller hedgerow behind and a gated entrance to one side. The wall and hedge would be replaced with a secure bicycle storage unit. The gated pedestrian entrance would remain to one side. The storage unit would span the majority width of the remaining frontage with a second gated entrance extending up to the side boundary with No 3. The storage unit and new gate would be constructed of steel and designed to act as the site's front boundary to a height of 1.15m. A further 200mm deep integrated planter is proposed atop the unit.
6. The height of the new enclosure would be taller than the existing, but not excessively so, remaining proportionate to the size of the front garden and below the height of the brick piers which exist to either side, including when taking account of the additional height of the planter. Although three-dimensional in form, the storage unit would be less than 1m deep and not overly dominant within the garden's frontage. The inclusion of soft landscaping as an integrated part of its design and incorporated within the site's frontage would be a positive feature and would be welcomed amongst the otherwise sparsely vegetated frontages elsewhere along Forest Road.
7. The appellant has described the proposed materials as Corten steel, designed deliberately to weather into a rough surfaced texture with a rusty red colour. Photographic evidence of similar installations elsewhere show how the bicycle store would appear as a naturally rustic feature that in my assessment would blend with, and contribute to, the variety of boundary structures already present within the area.
8. My impression overall is that whilst the proposal would be unashamedly contemporary in design, form and function, it would appropriately follow guidance within the Council's *Altering and Extending your Home Supplementary Planning Document* (2018) by appearing comfortable within the frontage of No 5 and well assimilated into the mixed fabric of the wider street scene, where the traditional character features of the dwelling would remain to be seen and appreciated.

Pedestrian Safety

9. Doors to the storage unit would swing across the pavement although when fully open would lie flush with the front elevation of the structure. However, I observed the pavement to be reasonably wide at this point, approximately 2.5m according to a measurement provided by the appellant. Any encroachment during access to the store would be small scale, with ample pavement width remaining, and would be temporary in nature. Such a limited incursion onto a footpath is not uncommon and would be comparable in many ways to a car door opening over the footway from a kerbside parked vehicle, as would occur with anyone utilising the permit holder parking bays that exist along the length of Forest Road, or else from a vehicle traversing a pavement to access a frontage parking space or garage, as I observed to be the case directly opposite the appeal property.
10. Any impact upon the function of the footway would be minimal and momentary, and I am satisfied that there would be no harmful obstruction for any user, including those in wheelchairs or pushing buggies.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I find that there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the area, or to pedestrian safety along Forest Road. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Policies SP1, SP3 or INF2 of the Newham Local Plan 2018, or Policies D4 and T4 of The London Plan 2021. Between them, and amongst other things, these seek to ensure that new development displays a high quality of urban design that respects and contributes to local distinctiveness, and which creates safe places, including within the public realm and on the road network. For the same reasons I find no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for achieving well-designed places.
12. The appeal is therefore allowed subject to the standard time condition and a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accord with the submitted plans, which is required for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. The Council's suggested condition to require the materials used to match those used on the existing building fails to acknowledge the nature and detail of the proposal and is unnecessary.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR