



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2025 by R Dickson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/D/25/3363036

5 Stowe Road, Hammersmith and Fulham, London W12 8BQ

- 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 Ms Sarah Stagg against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
 - The application Ref is 2024/01836/FUL.
 - The development proposed is alterations to the front garden to include removal of the front wall, installation of a new driveway and a drop-down curb.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are 1) whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Coningham and Lime Grove Conservation Area, 2) the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of occupants of surrounding residential properties with regard to parking, 3) the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, and 4) the effect of the proposed development on flood risk.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. Stowe Road is part of the grid pattern of streets within the Coningham and Lime Grove Conservation Area (CA). Half of Stowe Road comprises semi-detached mid to late 19th century houses, of three or four storeys including a semi-basement. Beyond the intersection of Scotts Road, most of the dwellings are terraced and have a more varied age. Despite the slight variation of house types, heights and detailing, the road is unified by the space between the front elevation of the building and the pavement. Most buildings have a planted front garden, with shrubs or hedging near to the low boundary wall, which provides an element of privacy. This feature forms a positive and important contribution to the significance of the CA. Although there are some parking bays within front gardens on Stowe Road, these are in the minority and do not form part of the prevailing character of the CA.

5. The appeal site, 5 Stowe Road, is a semi-detached double fronted dwelling with a low front boundary wall and a pair of low pedestrian gate piers. There is a hedge above one side of the wall, with some plants and paving in the front garden. The host, together with a small group around it, is shorter and wider with less verticality than others on the road. The frontage appears to be largely symmetrical from the street, and the symmetrical boundary wall contributes to the symmetry. These features of the host are a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. The removal of one side of the wall and replacement with a metal gate would create a visual imbalance when viewing the appeal property from the road which would be harmful to the symmetry of the host and its contribution to the CA. The loss of the wall would create an uncharacteristic break in the continuous walled frontage, allowing views of the semi basement, its access steps and proposed balustrade, further eroding the perceived symmetry from public views. The hedge above the wall would also be lost, however this would be replaced on the other side of the pedestrian gate. Although the retention of some hedging to the boundary would be positive, the overall effect of the lightweight gate on one side with a hedge atop the wall on the other side would further unbalance the frontage of the appeal property.
7. The Coningham and Lime Grove Conservation Area Character Profile (CA Character Profile) suggests that where there is no boundary definition, the original railings should be reinstated where appropriate, or in the later buildings a low brick wall. While both metal railings and solid walls are identified as features of the CA, I do not have any evidence before me to suggest that metal railings were an original feature of the appeal property that should be reinstated. Even so, the appeal property has existing strong boundary definition, therefore the replacement with railings, or even a gate in the design of metal railings as proposed, would be an incongruous addition and harmful to the significance of the CA.
8. The CA Character Profile also outlines that the creation of forecourt parking can have a detrimental effect on the character and amenity value of the streetscape with the resultant loss of front gardens and their features, boundary treatments and the sense of enclosure these give, and in damaging the uniform appearance of terraces and groups of houses. I have found this to be the case with the proposed development.
9. The gates between 3 Stowe Road and the appeal site differ from the proposal as they follow the natural break between the frontages of the houses and do not contribute to the symmetry of either dwelling. No 2 also has a gated parking area, however it is directly adjacent to an open forecourt, therefore the break in the continuous frontage has a lesser impact. Near to the appeal site, Nos 7, 17, 24 and 26 have a break in their boundaries which allows access for vehicle parking. I have not been provided with evidence of the specific circumstances of these examples, and I therefore cannot be sure whether they are original features, or that they have consent. Nevertheless, the retention or reinstatement of the original railings, walls and piers, is encouraged by the CA Character Profile.
10. Given my findings above, the proposal would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Due to its overall size and scale within the CA there would be minor harm caused. It would be relatively localised and would therefore result in less than substantial harm to the CA. Whilst the proposal would

ensure that the occupants have safe and adequate access to car parking, these are not public benefits which would outweigh the harm caused to the significance of the CA.

11. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021), policies OS5, DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (2018) (Local Plan), which collectively seek to ensure that development contributes positively to the quality of the area through achieving a harmonious relationship with neighbours while preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the CA. It would also fail to accord with the provisions of sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and would be contrary to key principles CAG2, CAG3, and CAG6 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD).

Living conditions

12. Although the proposal would prevent parking outside No 5, the appellant has demonstrated that there is sufficient on-street parking at present along Stowe Road. The loss of one space would be unlikely to cause significant harm to the neighbouring occupiers, particularly given that there is on street provision on both sides of the road. As such, any visitors to the neighbouring properties would be likely to find a space nearby.
13. The council does not dispute that the proposal complies with criterion i) of key principle TR23 of the SPD (2018), which supports forecourt parking where evening on street parking stress is 80% or less. Given my findings above, the proposed development would not cause harm to the living conditions of occupants of surrounding residential properties with regard to parking provision. It would comply with policy HO11 of the Local Plan (2018) which seeks to achieve a high standard of design by taking into account vehicle parking.

Highway safety

14. A vehicle crossover and dropped kerb is already present adjacent to the site, between No 3 and 5, and the proposal would result in the increase in size of this crossover. While I acknowledge that crossovers may present unnecessary hazards for pedestrians with limited mobility or visual impairments, the proposal would not result in any additional level changes along this stretch of pavement. The distance between the level changes would be increased, but the overall number of level changes would remain the same as the existing situation. During my site visit it was evident that the existing vehicle crossovers were well maintained, and I see no reason why the crossover at the appeal site would result in undulating or uneven surfaces in this location. As such, the proposal would not harm pedestrian safety in this regard.
15. The council and appellant disagree on the size of the proposed parking bay. Even so, taking the council's measurements, the space would meet the minimum size required by key principle TR23 of the SPD (2018). The notes on the plans before me, together with the appellant's statement indicate that the parking bay is likely to accommodate a larger vehicle without it overhanging the pavement.
16. Stowe Road has cars parked on either side and is a one-way road. During my site visit I observed that it is subject to a 20mph speed limit. The proposed parking bay would be accessed by either reversing into the space, or out of the space onto the

road which would present very limited risk to vehicle drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. However, in terms of both vehicular and pedestrian highway safety, it is not uncommon to have vehicle crossovers or off-street parking bays that require a reversing manoeuvre to be performed either on entry or exit. Given that there are other off street parking bays together with a low-speed limit, cars parked either side and a single direction of travel, the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe impact on the road network.

17. Accordingly, the proposal would be in accordance with policies T1, T4 and T6 of the Local Plan (2018), which seek to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety is upheld, and that new developments adhere to vehicle parking standards. It would also accord with key principles TR3, TR4, and TR23 of the SPD (2018). I have also had regard to key principle TR17 of the SPD (2018) which requires developers to pay for any work to the highways that would result from the proposed development.

Flood risk

18. The appeal site is within Flood Zone 2 and 3. During my site visit I observed that the front garden had some planting and paving. The appellant has provided a sectional drawing showing the permeable surface which would be used on the parking bay. Despite this additional plan that has been presented during the appeal, I do not have any evidence before me detailing the current situation with regards to surface water flooding, nor do I have any substantive evidence before me which details the likely effects of the proposed parking bay, even with a permeable surface, on surface water flooding.
19. The plans submitted with the original application show that the parking bay would have a permeable surface. In this respect, the proposal is in accordance with key principle SuD6 of the SPD (2018). However, the proposal conflicts with policy CC3 of the Local Plan (2018) which requires a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to be provided for development within Flood Zones 2 and 3. As such, I have insufficient information to determine whether the proposal would be in accordance with policy CC4 of the Local Plan (2018) which seeks to ensure that even with permeable car parking areas, no run-off is directed into the sewer system.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm and thereby fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, for the reasons above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Dickson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR