



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **S Simms BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/25/3365580

23 Maplestead Road, Dagenham RM9 4XH

- 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 Mohamed Bharadia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
 - The application Ref is 25/00326/FULL.
 - The development proposed is construction of a 2 storey side extension and single storey front extension to create a new 1 bed 2 person dwelling with associated cycle and refuse store and a front porch to the host dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for a full award of costs was made by Mohamed Bharadia against the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. This is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appellant states that the proposed development would fall below the threshold for biodiversity net gain (BNG). The parties were invited to provide further evidence to demonstrate either that this was the case or that the biodiversity gain objective could be met, including the necessary quantitative assessments.
4. The appellant provided an aerial image annotated to show parts of the site currently hard surfaced and advised that the LPA had raised this issue during the validation process but accepted that the exemption applied based on that image, noting that the area that the proposed dwelling would occupy was largely paved.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposal on:
 - biodiversity
 - the character and appearance of the area and
 - the use of sustainable transport and adequacy of parking provision.

Reasons

Biodiversity

6. The paved area within the proposed footprint of about 40sqm is at most about 20sqm in area, leaving 20sqm of footprint on land currently comprising grass or hedgerow. Whilst the proposed roof and site plan appears to omit the porch with the relocated door, it does show a further area of hardstanding for motorcycle parking and bin and cycle stores, on land that is currently grass or hedgerow.
7. This area measures at least 15sqm, so that the total area of habitat impacted would be greater than 25sqm. Furthermore, because the proposed roof site plan shows no retained hedgerow and the proposal relies on amenity space that is in part currently occupied by it, I consider it more likely than not that more than 5m of hedgerow would also be impacted by the proposed development.
8. Without an exemption, the appellant must demonstrate that the biodiversity gain objective could be met. No such evidence is before me, so I cannot be sure the BNG condition would meet the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Consequently, I find the proposal unlikely to provide a net gain for biodiversity, contrary to paragraph 187 of the Framework. I attach significant weight to this matter.

Character and appearance

9. The site is a wedge-shaped corner plot containing the two-storey end house of a terrace of six, set back from a tree-lined street of similar terraces. The main door is in the end wall. The unattached neighbouring house is the end house of a terrace of three set at right angles in a diagonally mirrored plot on a side road. An area of public green space containing a tree is at the corner of the two streets.
10. This layout is characteristic of the wider Becontree Estate, albeit details, such as the presence or shape of green space at street corners or pedestrian accesses, or the triangular or square shape of corner plots vary. The Council states that the Estate is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), summarises its significance and quotes from one of five appeal decisions in which it was found to be an NDHA.
11. The appellant disagrees, supplying appeal decisions that found otherwise. I have neither the full decisions cited by the Council, nor the evidence that led to them. All but one¹ of those supplied by the appellant pre-date the adoption of the Barking and Dagenham Local Plan (BDLP) in September 2024 and, again, I do not have the evidence that led to them before me.
12. Policy SPP6 of the BDLP refers to the Becontree Estate. Its justification states that a Design Code is under development to help preserve it as an NDHA; however, that Code is not before me. Whilst I have had regard to the evidence on the historic importance of the Estate, I am also mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance.² I do not have a copy of a local list entry or a policy stating that it is an NDHA. Therefore, for the purposes of this appeal, I do not consider it one.
13. The proposal is to extend the terrace to create a further dwelling, the rear corner of which would be built to and clipped at the boundary with the unattached neighbour.

¹ APP/Z5060/W/24/3345112

² Ref. ID: 18a-040-20190723

A new roof hip would be formed, chamfered at the rear corner. A single storey front element with monopitch roof would contain the door and ground floor window to the new dwelling and a relocated door to the existing house. The side and part of the front gardens would be allocated to the new dwelling.

14. The effect would be to restrict the view of the neighbouring terrace and side road from the street, reducing spaciousness and eroding the gap between terraces that is a characteristic of the area. Despite examples on Goresbrook Road and Romsey Road in the wider Estate, angled walls and chamfered roof hips are not generally a characteristic and would, in my view, appear unusual. Whilst more common, the front extension would also detract from the simplicity of the original.
15. Decisions supplied by the appellant show that permission has been granted on corner plots in the area for front and side extensions in the past. However, most do not have angled walls and chamfered roofs. Of those that do, few are as wide or fill the plot to the boundary. In some cases, the gap to an unattached neighbour was larger or existing extensions across a street or pedestrian access meant that symmetry had already been compromised or would be restored by the proposal.
16. I have also had regard to the 2016 appeal decision in respect of the site³. I note that the Council did not refuse on character and appearance and accept that the design had some similarities to that before me now. However, neither it nor the policies that applied at the time were the same. The Officer Report that resulted in the refusal that led to that appeal does not, for example, refer to area-specific policies such as Policy SPP6 of the BDLP.
17. Both this and many of the other supplied decisions pre-date adoption of the BDLP. Whilst I have no copies of the superseded policies to compare, the justification for Policy SPP6 clearly anticipates Becontree Estate seeing the least development, to protect its character. This recognises both the need to develop small sites and the limited remaining opportunities to do so on the Estate without losing the spaciousness that forms one of its original and largely remaining characteristics.
18. Overall, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy D4 of the London Plan (March 2021) and Policies SP2, SPP6, and DMD1 of the BDLP. These policies seek to deliver good design, to ensure developments relate to their context, integrate with the existing character of the Becontree Estate and enable the preservation of its historic fabric.
19. As I have found that the Estate is not an NDHA for the purposes of this appeal, Policy HC1 of the London Plan and Policy DMD4 of the BDLP are not engaged. Similarly, Policy D1 of the London Plan does not directly address development management, and I find no conflict in respect of this policy.

Sustainable transport and parking

20. Maplestead Road is a moderately busy residential through road with a 20mph speed limit and humps. The area is suburban and within 200m there are a doctor's surgery, a parade of shops, a primary school and bus stops served by a frequent service between Barking and Hainault. I saw few pedestrians or cyclists during my site visit on a weekday afternoon in the school holidays.

³ APP/Z5060/W/16/3147734

21. Pavement parking is marked on sections of the footway. The area is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) with only resident permit holders allowed to park from 8.30am to 5.30pm on weekdays. The area was not heavily parked during my site visit. The Council's highways officer advises that the site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) score of 2 on a scale of 0-6, which they describe as 'poor'.
22. London Plan Policies T5 and T6.1 require at least 1.5 cycle spaces and a maximum of 0.75 parking spaces for dwellings of the size proposed in Outer London. Policy T6 counts motorcycle spaces towards that maximum.
23. The proposal would provide a store for two cycles and a motorcycle space, but no parking survey or stress assessment has been carried out, and no management plan, strategy for promoting sustainable travel and limiting car use, or details of CPZ contributions or permit restrictions have been submitted. Whilst some of the missing evidence could be secured by conditions, an obligation relating to CPZ contributions or permit restrictions may be required.
24. Decisions supplied by the appellant show that permission has been granted in the past for similar development in the area with no car parking. However, accessibility levels inevitably vary, and relevant policies have changed over time. In this case, the Council is primarily concerned about the lack of evidence that unmet demand would not be diverted to sustainable modes or otherwise managed.
25. Whilst the proposal complies with London Plan Policy T5 on cycle spaces, it is contrary to London Plan Policies T6 and T6.1, and to Policy DMT2 of the BDLP, which set maximum parking standards, address sustainable travel and require adequate assessment, management and mitigation of residual parking impacts. I attach significant weight to these conflicts.

Other Matters

26. The appeal site could be considered a small site in terms of the Mayor's Small Site Design Codes London Plan Guidance (June 2023), however, in my view, it is not a good example of the type of sites to which it refers. Within the street-facing context, for example, it does not form a gap or comprise the completion of a corner. It also has limited public transport accessibility, so densification is not a priority.
27. Nonetheless, the proposal would make a small difference to housing supply and assist in meeting the strategic target for provision on small sites, which has not been met and seems unlikely to be soon. The Council's efforts in respect of sites under a hectare mitigate but do not obviate its failure in this respect. This and the modest economic boost the proposal would create are both benefits.

Planning Balance

28. The 2023 Housing Delivery Test result for the Borough was 66% and it is common ground that, whilst improving, housing delivery remains substantially below the requirement. In these circumstances footnote 7 of the Framework establishes that the policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date.
29. Consequently, permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. The site is not within a protected area, but the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

30. Specifically, paragraphs 115 and 135 of the Framework requires development to prioritise sustainable transport modes and be sympathetic to local character. I have found harm in respect of the effects on character, appearance, use of sustainable transport and adequacy of parking, to which I attach significant weight.
31. Set against this, the under-delivery of housing overall and on small sites specifically is an important matter. The proposal would address these, but only in a small way. The modest weight I therefore attach to these benefits, is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm I have identified. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

32. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters including the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Simms

INSPECTOR