
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by **S F Barnes MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/25/3369946

Land Adjoining 1-17 Wedgewood Way, Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood, SW19 3ES

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Zul Virani of Lower Richmond Properties Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 25/01847/PIP.
 - The development proposed is 'To erect 1 x detached dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Zul Virani of Lower Richmond Properties Limited against the Council of the London Borough of Croydon. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The proposal is for Permission in Principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The Permission in Principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or Permission in Principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second stage (Technical Details Consent or TDC) assesses the detailed development proposals. This appeal relates to the first stage.
4. The scope of the considerations for Permission in Principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development proposed. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent TDC application if Permission in Principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether the site is suitable for residential development, with particular regard to the effects of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area;
 - highway safety; and
 - ecology and biodiversity.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is within a predominantly residential area that is generally characterised by 2 storey dwellings set within spacious garden plots. Along this part of Beulah Hill, dwellings are generally well set-back either by gardens or by the landscaped verges found on this side of the road.
7. The appeal site relates to part of a wide area of verge beside the highway at Beulah Hill, between its junctions with Convent Hill and Wedgwood Way. Much of the site is overgrown with established vegetation and some modestly sized trees. Altogether its appearance contributes to a softening effect on the immediate environment.
8. Given its location adjoining the highway, development of a single dwelling on the site would be prominent. The shallow depth of the site would not allow a building to be set back from Beulah Hill in a way that is comparable to any of its adjoining properties. Whilst design and appearance would be matters to properly be considered at TDC stage, there are nonetheless few options for siting within this small appeal plot. Any such proposal would therefore appear cramped in its plot and its siting would be incongruous with the pattern of development along this part of the streetscene.
9. The appellant considers that the matters of retained trees and landscaping provision would be resolved at TDC stage. However, introducing built-form would erode the contribution to the streetscene made by the existing open character and natural features on site, resulting in harm. In combination, these factors would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Consequently, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with relevant provisions of Policy D3 of The London Plan (March 2021) (LP) and Policies SP4 and Policy DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan (2018) (CLP). Those policies, in summary, seek to ensure high quality development that respects the development pattern, siting and natural features of the surrounding area.

Highway safety

11. Much of the site's frontage adjoins a well-trafficked highway and its rear boundary abuts established housing. Double yellow lines restrict where vehicles can park or wait along part of the opposite side of Beulah Hill and at the junction with Wedgwood Way. At my site visit, I observed a pedestrian crossing refuge aligning to roughly the centre of the site's frontage on Beulah Hill. Users of the crossing need to be aware of vehicles emerging from road junctions with Wedgewood Way, Convent Hill and Downsview Road, and from driveways to the properties on the opposite side of the road.
12. The scheme before me does not (and need not) provide details of access. The appellant suggests that one design possibility would be for no car parking to be provided on-site. This would obviate the need for direct vehicle access.
13. Nevertheless, a single dwelling would have regular servicing requirements, including home deliveries and refuse collections. It is unclear how servicing

vehicles would access the site. Parking on the adjoining section of Beulah Hill would reasonably be the most convenient and attractive location for servicing trips.

14. However, parking in this location would be likely to obstruct traffic and restrict visibility for road users using the crossing and those emerging from nearby junctions and driveways. Moreover, in the case of obstructed traffic, frustrated drivers may carry out manoeuvres, such as overtaking parked vehicles, which they would not otherwise attempt. These effects would increase the risk of collisions with pedestrians using the crossing.
15. I am aware that an Inspector considered access and highway safety when dealing with a previous dismissed appeal¹ at this site regarding an application for outline planning permission for 2 houses and car parking provision. A smaller scheme providing a single dwelling without a vehicular access would address some of the access and highway safety concerns identified by that Inspector.
16. Nonetheless, and pertinent to this appeal, the scheme was dismissed in part due to serious concern about the impact of servicing or delivery vehicles stopping and obstructing traffic and visibility along Beulah Hill for road users and pedestrians; those findings reinforce my concerns in this regard.
17. Consequently, I am not satisfied that highway safety matters in this location could be resolved at the TDC stage. The proposal would therefore adversely affect highway safety. This would conflict with relevant provisions of Policy T4 of LP and Policies SP8 and DM29 of the CLP. Those policies, in summary, seek to ensure adequate consideration for highway safety.
18. The Council's Decision Notice refers to Policies T6 of the LP and DM30 of the CLP, which both relate to provision of parking in new development. However, I have identified no conflict in relation to those policies.

Ecology and biodiversity

19. There is disagreement between the main parties regarding the effect of the proposal on the habitat value of the site. I have been referred to the findings of the Inspector dealing with a previous decision on the site. However, those relate to a materially different scheme, the full details of which are not before me.
20. The evidence indicates the potential for the proposed development to impact on ecological interests including bats, reptiles, badgers and nesting birds. However, a final design of the appeal scheme has not been settled. As set out in the PPG, consideration of duties owed to any protected species identified at the site would apply at the TDC stage. Development would not be able to commence until TDC had been obtained, were the appeal successful.
21. I am mindful that there is no dispute between the parties that 'biodiversity net gain' would also be a matter for the TDC stage. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful impact on ecology and biodiversity. As such, the principle of the proposed development would not conflict with relevant provisions of Policies G6 of the LP and Policies SP7 and DM27 of the CLP which, in summary, seek to safeguard green infrastructure and promote biodiversity.

¹ Appeal ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3342310

Other Matters

22. The appellant contends that the principle of developing the site has not previously been in issue. I have not been provided with full details of previous applications and appeals at the site. Therefore, my consideration is limited to the evidence before me and the scope of assessment that I set out above, in accordance with the PPG.
23. My attention has been drawn to residential schemes at the corner of Beulah Hill and Hermitage Road, which I observed from the street at my visit, and to an approved scheme further along Beulah Hill². Those schemes are both said to have replaced a landscaped plot and are positioned close to the highway.
24. The Council referred to a change in its 'planning rules' since it decided the latter case, albeit the nature of that change is unclear. Nonetheless, both of those schemes are on larger sites, particularly in terms of their depth. As they are some distance from the appeal site, their designs and layouts do not inform the immediate context in which the appeal scheme would be seen and experienced. Moreover, both sites are set within different highway contexts to the appeal site. These schemes are therefore not directly comparable with the scheme before me and do not justify the proposal, particularly where harm has been identified.
25. The proposal would deliver a single new home on a small site, and such development can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements of an area. However, the benefits of the appeal scheme would be modest in view of its small scale and do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

26. Although I have not found harm to ecology and biodiversity, the site would be unsuitable for residential development having regard to the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and on highway safety. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, and the material considerations do not indicate a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with that plan. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

S F Barnes

INSPECTOR

² Application ref: 24/01818/OUT