

Pre-Application Briefing to Committee

1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Reference No: PRE/2020/0205

Ward: Woodside

Address: Rear of 132 Station Road N22 7SX

Proposal: Construction of 6 dwellings set in landscaped area and creation of community wildlife garden, following the demolition of existing structures

Applicant / Agent: Arden Property Limited

Ownership: Private

Case Officer Contact: Laurence Ackrill

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The proposed development is being reported to Planning Sub-Committee to enable members to view it in good time ahead of a full planning application submission. Any comments made are of a provisional nature only and will not prejudice the final outcome of any formally submitted planning application.
- 2.2. The proposal follows a previous application refused at the Planning Sub-Committee early 2018, subsequently dismissed at appeal, and a more recent withdrawn application as detailed in the planning history section.
- 2.3. It is anticipated that the planning application, once received, will be presented to the Planning Sub-Committee in early 2021. The applicant has been recently engaged in pre-application discussions with Haringey Officers.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site relates to a plot of land which previously served as a private garden belonging to 132 Station Road. Mapping and site visit evidence suggest it has not been used as a residential garden for many years. The site is located to the east of the New River, and to the rear of gardens serving terraced houses along Station Road to the south, Park Avenue to the north west and Barrett Avenue to the north. The site is accessed via a passageway which opens on to Station Road currently serving 140 Station Road which adjoins the site to the west. It includes a number of single storey, somewhat dilapidated structures / sheds.
- 3.2 The site is within the Wood Green Common conservation area. Whilst there are no listed buildings within the site, the Grade II listed New River tunnel entrance is

located on land which adjoins the site to the west. The New River itself is locally listed.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. The proposed works involve the demolition of existing structures and construction of 6 dwellings (1 x two storey dwelling with basement & 5 x single storey dwellings with basement) set in a landscaped area, and the creation of a community wildlife garden with public access.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 HGY/2020/1841 - Rear of 132 Station Road London N22 7SX - Construction of 6 dwellings set in landscaped area and creation of community wildlife garden, following the demolition of existing structures – Withdrawn.
- 5.2 HGY/2017/2182 - Land at the rear of 132 Station Road London N22 7SX London - Demolition of existing structures and redevelopment of the site to provide 3 no. two storey family sized dwellings (with basement floors) and associated refuse shelters, cycle parking and additional landscaping. – Refused - 22/01/2018. Appeal reference APP/Y5420/W/18/3196614 - Appeal dismissed - 29/06/2018.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1. Public Consultation

- 6.2. This scheme is currently at pre-application stage and therefore no formal consultation has been undertaken. However, an application for the same development was recently withdrawn, as highlighted within the planning history section of this report. That application was publically consulted on. The applicant had also previously undertaken consultations with local residents prior to that.

7. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. The Council's initial views on the development proposals are outlined below:

Principle of Development

- 7.2. The principle of additional housing is supported by the London Plan (2016) Policies 3.3 'Increasing Housing Supply' and 3.4 'Optimising Housing Potential'. It is also supported by Haringey's Local Plan Policy SP2 'Housing'. Policy SP2 states that the Council will seek to ensure a mix of dwelling sizes arising from development and recognises that there is a lack of family sized housing in the Borough. The Haringey Local Plan has a target of 19,820 dwellings between 2011 and 2026.

- 7.3. The provision of public open space (approximately 200m²) would provide a public benefit given that the existing site is not open to the public, and would weigh in favour of the development. A section 106 agreement would be required to ensure that it is the responsibility of the developers / occupiers of the site to maintain that area and to ensure public access is retained.
- 7.4. Despite the plot having been historically associated as a private garden, it is an anomaly in that it does not conform with the layout of development in the area which is characterised by terraced houses on rectangular plots with regularly sized garden areas to the front and rear. The proposed development would not result in the loss of private garden space to any of the existing properties along Station Road or Barrett Avenue.
- 7.5. Whilst the existing 'Coach House' on the site may have been used for employment purposes (it was last used as a music recording studio), the site is not located within a designated area for employment. In addition, the locality of the site is characterised by residential dwellings and the studio is very modest. As such, the use of the site for residential purposes would be more appropriate than that of any commercial use. Given the relatively small scale nature of the building in question, the level of employment loss would be insignificant and would be outweighed by the provision of the creation of additional housing delivery on the site in this case
- 7.6. The site is in a sustainable location, located within 800m of both tube (Wood Green) and rail stations (Alexandra Palace), the site is also within close proximity to the Wood Green district town centre and within a PTAL 5 area which is considered very good. A wide variety of 24-hour bus services are accessible from Wood Green within a 10-minute walk of the site, with W3 bus stops being located within a minutes' walk of the application site along Station Road, which also provides a 24-hour service.
- 7.7. The site itself is not subject to any open space or biodiversity policy designations.

Design and Appearance

- 7.8. Officers consider the consider the proposed massing and scale of the proposal and building form to be acceptable. Five of the proposed dwellings would be read as single storey buildings (with additional habitable space provided at basement level). As such the development would appear subservient to the adjacent two storey terraced housing. The proposed 'Coach House' dwelling would replace an existing two storey structure in a similar location. Given the similarities in the scale of the built form in that location, it is considered that this

element of the scheme would have a similar impact to that of the existing building in terms of its visual prominence.

- 7.11 Overall, the concept has the potential to be respectful of the landscaped character of the site and subordinate to the surrounding buildings. There is no in principle objection to the proposed design and this is considered the way forward in providing a natural / seamless appearance to best reflect the context of the existing site and neighbouring residential use.

Conservation area

- 7.12 The site is currently in poor condition and cluttered with dense, overgrown vegetation and a number of run-down sheds which currently detract from the character and quality of the Conservation Area. This is of course is partly a maintenance issue.
- 7.13 The proposal has been developed in consultation with both conservation and urban design officers and originates from a comprehensive design exploration based on clear understanding of the green and visually open character of the site as well as from full appreciation of its spatial and visual relationship with the back gardens of the surrounding residential terraces.

Standard of accommodation

- 7.15 The proposed units would meet the relevant internal space standards for each sized unit. The 5 smaller dwellings would be single aspect, but split level and also south-west facing. They would also be shallow enough in plan to receive good levels of sunlight from the south and daylight from roof lights. The proposed couch house dwelling includes dual aspect views and also south and south west facing. All of the proposed units would provide sufficient levels of outlook from habitable rooms and daylight for future occupiers. Amenity areas are provided by way of courtyard garden areas and inset balconies at ground floor level.

Impacts on Amenity of Surrounding Residents

- 7.16 Whilst the dwellings would be somewhat visible from upper floor windows of neighbouring properties, this would not in itself constitute harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. A further application would again be subject to public consultation and the views of respondents would be fully considered.

Parking and highway safety

- 7.19 The current scheme would provide 6 additional units, and would be subject to being designated as a car free development, secured by way of a section 106 agreement. The area has a the high public transport accessibility rating (PTAL 5).

Basement development

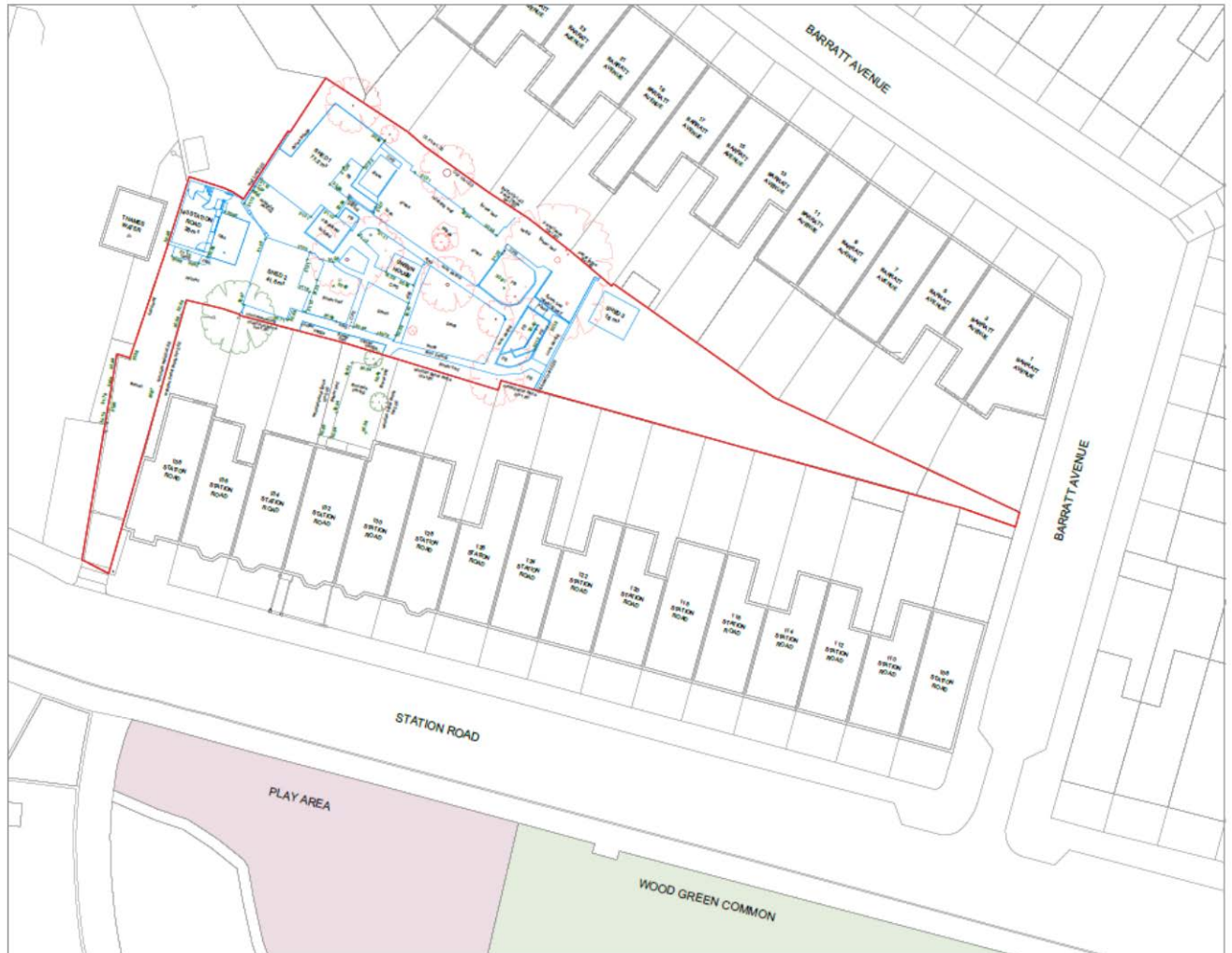
- 7.20 A BIA was submitted with the previous application which showed no risk of flooding from either surface water or from rivers or seas (including the New River) resulting from the excavation of the basements and lightwells that might affect future occupiers.
- 7.21 In terms of ground movements, the assessment shows that either none or very slight levels as most existing residential properties lie beyond the distance to no horizontal or vertical ground movement due to the basement excavations and wall constructions. Calculations indicate that only the rear single storey extension to 19 Barratt Avenue may experience very slight hairline cracks that can be easily treated.

Trees and ecology

- 7.22 A number of trees would need to be removed to facilitate the development. However, the trees to be removed from the site are generally category C trees, or below and of low amenity value. Three category B trees of reasonable amenity value would also need to be removed. 25 new trees would be planted within the site.
- 7.23 Trees next to the New River may provide a foraging habitat for bats. These trees are not affected by the proposal and therefore foraging routes through and next to the New River will not be affected here.

PLANS AND IMAGES

Site Location Plan





Site image (looking north)



Site image (looking south)



View of Access Road into site from Station Road.



View of one of existing structures on site



View of site from the rear of 138 Station Road



View of site from the access from Barratt Avenue



Basement Plan



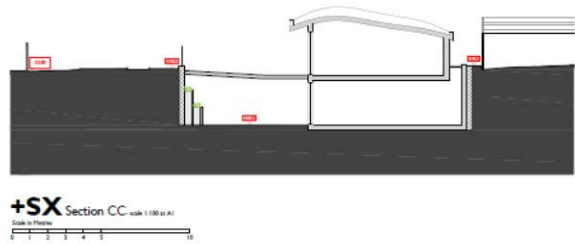
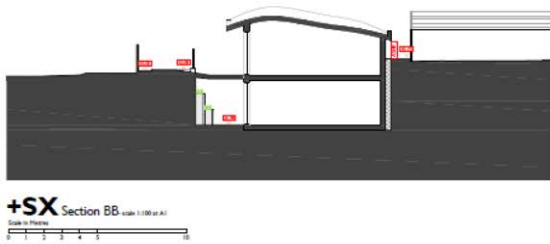
Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Roof Plan



Section / Elevation Drawing



Side Elevation Drawing of Coach House Building



+SX Section DD - scale 1:100 (at A1)
Scale in Metres



+SX Section EE - scale 1:100 (at A1)
Scale in Metres

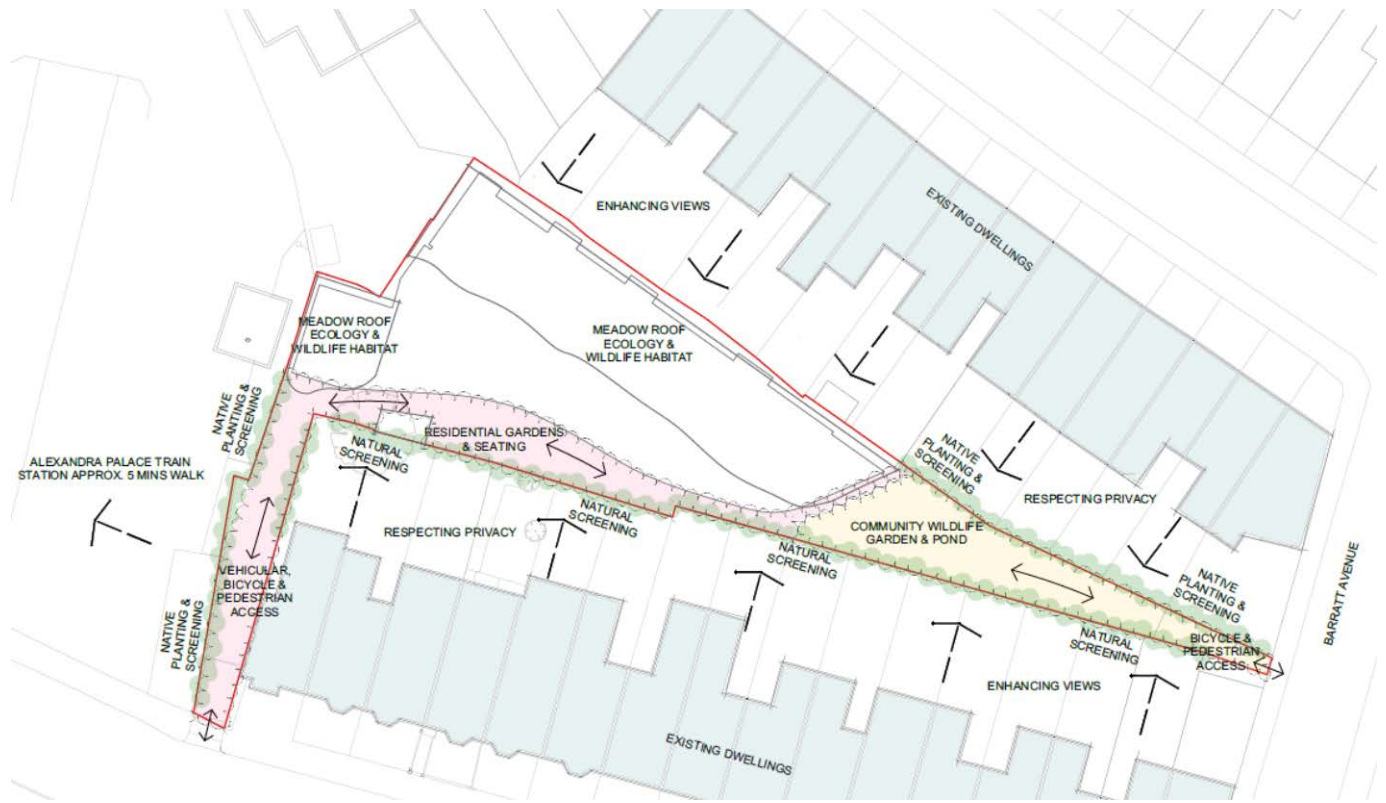


+SX Section FF - scale 1:100 (at A1)
Scale in Metres

Elevation Drawings



Landscape Plan



Landscape Strategy Plan



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2018

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29th June 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/18/3196614

Land at the rear of 132 Station Road, Wood Green, London N22 7SX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Danny Sofizade against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application Ref HGY/2017/2182, dated 21 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2018.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing structures and redevelopment of the site to provide 3 no. two storey family sized dwellings (with basement floors) and associated refuse shelters, cycle parking and additional landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development varies between the application form and the subsequent documents. I have used the version given on the decision notice, as it describes the proposal more accurately.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character or appearance of the Wood Green Common Conservation Area, and whether the development would provide adequate living conditions for future occupants, with particular reference to access arrangements to the site.

Reasons

Conservation area

4. The Wood Green Common Conservation Area (CA) is characterised by terraces of residential buildings which are interspersed with large areas of green space that were previously combined as a large common. A number of other building types are present, such as institutional, educational and retail premises. The appeal site comprises a triangular piece of land that is confined on three sides by terraces on Barratt Avenue, Park Avenue and Station Road. These streets comprise predominantly two storey buildings whose traditional character is typical of that found in the CA.
5. The appeal site is currently occupied by a number of structures associated with its use as a garden area for 132 Station Road. It is subservient in terms of the small scale and impermanent nature of the buildings, and its informal, natural

appearance. The historic maps indicate that the site has remained largely undeveloped since it was enclosed by the surrounding development. As a result, its historic form and layout remain clearly legible.

6. The site also provides an important contrast to the bustle of the surrounding streets in a busy urban area. Although largely hidden from public view, it is overlooked by a substantial number of private residences. It is quiet and tranquil, providing a degree of spaciousness within the tight grain of the terraces. The existing planting softens the site's appearance, and provides a buffer between the buildings, promoting an ambiance of privacy and seclusion. I note that the Wood Green Common Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the site as a neutral contributor to the area. However, in my view, all these attributes contribute positively to the significance of the CA.
7. The development would create three detached new dwellings, whose access would be taken from Station Road along the existing lane. The proposed new dwellings would broadly reflect the footprints of the existing structures, and their position closest to the access track. However, the development would introduce a cluster of principal dwellings within an area that is defined by ancillary structures. It therefore would be at odds with the prevailing historic pattern of development in the CA, whereby the principal elevations of the houses face directly onto the street, rather than a secondary space.
8. The new dwellings would be built with a basement level so as to appear single storey in height, and would be installed with green roofs. However, the green roofs would not have the same visual qualities as the garden land. The scheme would also provide landscaped gardens, reflecting to a degree the existing appearance of the site. Nonetheless, by its nature and usage, the residential development would fundamentally alter the character of the site, introducing hardscaping, lighting and domestic paraphernalia where none currently exist. Whilst the development would be physically lower in height than the terraces, the significance of the site as a subordinate space would be lost, and as a result, the character and appearance of the CA would be unacceptably harmed.
9. Accordingly, overall, the proposal conflicts with the overarching statutory duty as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which must be given considerable importance and weight, and with the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF), which seeks to protect heritage assets. In addition, it would fail to comply with Policy SP11 of the Haringey Local Plan, which requires development to respect local character and historic significance, and Policy DM1 of the Haringey Development Management DPD (DPD), insofar as it seeks a positive contribution to the distinctive character of the local area.
10. It would also conflict with DPD Policy DM9 and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan (LP), which jointly seek to protect heritage assets, LP Policy 7.4, which relates to local character, and LP Policy 7.6, insofar as it requires development design to be appropriate to its context.
11. Although serious, the harm to the heritage asset in this case would be less than substantial, within the meaning of the term in paragraph 133 of the NPPF. Paragraph 134 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

12. The scheme would add three dwellings to the housing supply in an accessible location, which is to be given significant weight. Were it able to be achieved, the removal of the metal gate would result in a small visual improvement to the CA. However, these factors would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
13. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm requires clear and convincing justification. Drawing all the above factors together, the combined public benefits do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the heritage assets.

Living conditions

14. The Council's second reason for refusal relates to the proposed general access arrangements to the site for services. I note that there would be no vehicle access to the development.
15. However, the refuse storage area would be located adjacent to the end of the access track, and I do not consider the distance from the street to be excessive. The Council has suggested a condition be imposed, in the event that I were to allow the appeal, seeking details of a scheme for the storage and collection of refuse from the premises. I am satisfied that such a condition would be sufficient to address this matter. In terms of access for fire-fighting, the installation of sprinkler systems within the new dwellings would be required by Building Regulations to mitigate fire risk, and so the scheme is acceptable in this regard.
16. The track is fairly wide, and is mostly visible from Station Road, and so would benefit from natural surveillance. On my visit, it did not strike me as being unappealing or potentially unsafe, and there is little evidence before me of the security problems alluded to be the Council. I agree that home deliveries are part of modern life, but there is little evidence to suggest that these could not be accommodated.
17. In its statement of case, the Council refers to the issues of access for mobility impaired and elderly users. It is clear that the development would not be suitable for those dependent on the use of the car for mobility. However, it is not unusual in densely populated urban areas for a proportion of residences to be inaccessible directly by car, and car-free developments are common in areas with good public transport links. Therefore, a conflict would arise with DPD Policy DM2, insofar as it requires new developments to be able to be used by all. Nonetheless, having regard to the policy's aims, it would otherwise provide an acceptable standard of access and therefore is not in conflict with the policy as a whole. I therefore find that the conflict in this case would not be so harmful as to warrant the withholding of planning permission.
18. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would provide adequate living conditions for future residents in terms of access arrangements. It would thus accord with DPD Policy DM7, which amongst other things, seeks to ensure good access, and with the overall aims of DPD Policy DM2.

Other Matters

19. The grade II listed tunnel entrance to the New River is located to the west of the site. However, it would not appear to be intervisible with the appeal site,

and there is no compelling evidence to show that its setting would be harmed by the development proposal.

20. I note that the scheme has undergone a number of revisions, and that the planning officer's report was favourable towards the development. I have also had regard to Policy H2 of the Draft London Plan, which relates to small sites. However, these matters have not led me to a different conclusion.
21. My attention has been drawn to four approved developments within the same Council area that the appellant considers comparable to the appeal scheme. All four related to land either within, or on the edge of a conservation area. However, I am not aware of the full details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted, and so I cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. Whilst these examples demonstrate that the development of small backland sites was acceptable in each of these cases, I am bound to consider the appeal scheme on its own merits, and on the evidence before me.
22. I note that the first two examples, one at land to the rear of Cornwall Avenue and one at the rear of 60-68 Cecile Park, were determined in 2008, and so they pre-date the adoption of the NPPF, which further limits the weight I can afford them. I have also taken into account the recent court judgement, *Dorothy Bohm v SSCLG [2017] EWHC 3217*, which is cited by the appellant. However, I am satisfied that the scheme as a whole has been fully considered in this case.
23. I acknowledge the appellant's stance that the site is a wasted resource, and that the appeal scheme would be an efficient use of the land. However, I do not share the view that open, undeveloped spaces within conservation areas, particularly those within urban locations, are inherently without value. Furthermore, the aim of optimising the development potential of the site would not strike an acceptable balance with the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

24. Despite the fact that the development would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers, it would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed development would thus conflict with the development plan as a whole, and so the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR