The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2016

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 5 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/16/3158176
52 Becmead Avenue, London, SW16 1UQ

- 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 & Mrs Michael & Katherine Thomson-Glover against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
- The application Ref 16/01526/FUL, dated 30 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2016.
- The development proposed is described as a dropped pavement for off street parking in the front garden.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dropped pavement for off street parking in the front garden at 52 Becmead Avenue, London, SW16 1UQ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/01526/FUL, dated 30 December 2015, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling, one of a semi-detached pair, stands on the southern frontage of Becmead Avenue, a predominantly residential street. The Avenue leads from Streatham High Street (A23) towards Tooting Bec Common, and has a wide carriageway, with footpaths either side. The dwellings on the southern frontage are well set back from the road on a common building line. The depth of the building line, in combination with the width of the road and footpaths are such as to engender a sense of spaciousness.

4. The appellants wish to use their front garden for parking. A front boundary enclosure would be lost, together with some hedging and other vegetation. The Council is concerned at the visual impact of this loss and its effect on local character. The development is said to be at odds with the detailed guidance on urban front gardens in paragraphs 6.3 & 6.4 of its Supplementary Planning Document: Building Alterations and Extensions (SPD), which I have taken into account.

5. I fully appreciate the Council's concern, but two factors in particular persuade me that the proposal would not result in harm. Firstly, parking in former front gardens is not uncharacteristic in the street. I noted, for example, that parking

facilities and crossovers served several properties on either side of the appeal dwelling including Nos. 36, 38, 40, 42, 46, 48, 50, 56, 58, 62 & 64. There were many examples of similar development on the opposite side of the street. Thus, in the immediate vicinity of the site, front gardens without parking facilities were the exception rather than the rule.

6. Secondly, the front garden is sufficiently large to accommodate the retention of some plants and the provision of more, as intended by the appellants. In this respect they intend to follow the commendable example set by some other local residents who have managed successfully to retain and/or add planting around their parking spaces so as to acceptably soften or mitigate the visual impact of development. I consider that this could feasibly be achieved on the appeal site.

7. I therefore conclude that the development, if appropriately carried out, would not give rise to harmful visual consequences and would not materially affect the character of the host property or its surroundings. Accordingly, no material conflict arises with those provisions of policies Q2 of the Lambeth Local Plan (LP) requiring that visual amenity should not be unacceptably compromised by development. Whilst the front enclosure to the garden would be removed, it is capable of being replaced in part, so that the provisions of LP policy Q15 relating to boundary treatments would not be unacceptably compromised.

Conditions

8. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions relating to materials and that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. It seems to me, however, that whilst the submitted plans give a general indication of the appellants proposals they are too sketchy, insufficiently precise, and lack essential detail.

9. I therefore came to the view that, were the principle of development acceptable, further details of the appellants' precise and hopefully professionally drawn proposals should be submitted for the Council's further consideration.

10. With this in mind, alternative draft conditions were circulated to the parties, and any comments made have been taken into account. The conditions are imposed in the interests of visual amenity and sustainable drainage.

11. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, including that the Council's Highways Department did not object, but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh those considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

2. No development shall begin until details of the following matters have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority: (a) the layout of the development to a scale of 1:20; (b) surface water drainage, including proposals for a sustainable urban drainage system, if practicable; (c) all ground & external surfacing materials, and (d) a layout & schedule of planting, including any to be retained.

3. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Any new planting which may become diseased, damaged, dead or is removed within 3 years of being planted, shall be immediately replaced with plants of a similar size and species.