

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2017

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5630/D/16/3165040

20 Bearfield Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 5ET

- 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 Mrs Emma Hull against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/12779/HOU, dated 23 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is an Asgard storage shed in front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an Asgard storage shed in front garden at 20 Bearfield Road, Kingston upon Thames KT2 5ET in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/12779/HOU, dated 23 July 2016.

Procedural matter

2. The Asgard storage shed is in place. It appears to reflect the details shown on the submitted plans and photographs.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the Asgard storage shed on the character and appearance of the host property and the local area.

Reasons

4. Bearfield Road is lined on both sides by traditional style dwellings of various types that stand behind short front gardens bounded by walls, fences and planting, most of which is low-level. As a result, a majority of properties along this highway have relatively open frontages to the road. Consequently, the content and condition of front gardens is a noticeable feature of the local street scene and the area to which No 20 belongs.
 5. From what I saw, several front gardens of properties close to the site contained detached outbuildings, which varied in size, shape and materials. Some properties also had bins and recycling containers stored at the front of the main house. In a number of cases, front gardens included planting and hard surface areas and some of these were used for the parking of vehicles. My
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- overall impression was that the highway frontages of buildings along Bearfield Road was varied and in my experience typical of a suburban residential street.
6. The appeal shed stands to one side of the small front garden of No 20, which is a semi-detached house. While it is sizeable, the shed is a proportionate addition. When seen from the road, it does not appear overly large or bulky in relation to the front garden of No 20 or the host building. It is, however, prominent in the street scene because the shed projects noticeably above the low front boundary wall of No 20. In views from opposite the site and just to each side, the shed obscures the lower part of the ground floor bay of No 20 and that of the attached house, which are attractive features of these buildings. Even so, these front bays could not reasonably be described as locally distinctive given the varied built form along Bearfield Road or an essential characteristic of the street or the local area.
 7. As the shed stands forward of the main front wall of No 20, it conflicts with Policy Guidance 41 of the Council's Residential Design SPD (SPD), which states that outbuildings should not be built forward of the established building line, ie in front of the existing house. That the shed is a metal structure is also at odds with SPD Policy Guidance 41 insofar as it advises that outbuildings should generally be built of similar materials to the existing house.
 8. Nevertheless, the shed provides a neat enclosed storage option for items that may otherwise be kept at the front of the house that would add to visual clutter both at the front of No 20 and within the street scene. These items could include recycling containers and domestic paraphernalia that if left in the open in front of the building, as elsewhere along Bearfield Road, would do little to add to the character and qualities of the area. The appellant also states that the shed could provide a secure store for bicycles and, on that basis, it would positively contribute to encouraging the use of sustainable transport.
 9. Although the shed clearly stands forward of the main front wall and the established build line along this side of the highway, other outbuildings do likewise. To that extent, its frontage position is not untypical. While the shed is metal, it is a material that in my experience is often used for outbuildings in gardens and thus does not look out of place in its residential context. The dark brown colour of the shed, set against the brown and red brick of the buildings beyond also subdues its overall visual impact.
 10. There are, therefore, various considerations that weigh in the planning balance for and against the development. While clearly evident at the front of No 20 and in the street scene, the shed does not appear incongruous particularly as other frontage outbuildings are also visible further along the road. On balance, the benefits of the shed, which include the opportunity to reduce clutter and encourage the use of sustainable transport, outweigh the limited visual harm that arises.
 11. A purpose of the guidelines set out in SPD Policy Guidance 41 is to ensure that the addition of an outbuilding to a garden does not adversely affect the character and setting of the house and the surrounding area. As the development would not do so, a conflict with SPD Policy Guidance 41 is insufficient, in itself, to withhold planning permission.

12. On the main issue, I conclude that the shed does not significantly harm the character or appearance of the host property and the local area. As such, there is no conflict with Policies DM 10 and CS 8 of the Council's Core Strategy and a purpose of the SPD. These policies and guidance broadly aim to ensure that development achieves good design and relates well with, and connects to, its surroundings.

Conditions

13. The Council has put forward several suggested conditions if planning permission were to be granted, which I have considered. As the development is complete, the standard time limit condition is unnecessary. For the same reason, conditions to require that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans or to require that the materials match the existing building are also unnecessary.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR