
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2017

by R J Maile BSc FRICS

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

Decision date: 27 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1415/D/17/3180138

106 Parker Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3TT.

- 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 Matthew Bumpus against the decision of Hastings Borough Council.
 - The application ref: HS/FA/17/00202, dated 15 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is formation of parking bay and vehicular crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue here is the effect of the works to create the parking bay upon the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. This property comprises an inter-war, semi-detached house located within a residential area. Parker Road slopes steeply in both directions, such that no. 106 is some 2.6m above pavement level.
4. The scheme before me proposes a substantial excavation of the front garden, which is largely grassed, and its replacement by a brick-lined parking space with a hard surfaced base of permeable material.
5. The majority of the houses on the opposite side of the road have off-street parking spaces. These, however, are level with the street and have not required the excavation of the front garden areas.
6. Both no. 106 and the most adjacent houses possess garages to the rear that are approached over a private access roadway. The houses opposite do not benefit from such a rear service road, neither do the more modern dwellings to the southwest at nos. 90-98 Parker Road. Several of these latter properties have driveways or parking spaces clear of the highway. However, they do not have the visual impact that would be occasioned by the current proposal given that the slope of their front gardens is much less pronounced than that to no. 106.

7. Chapter 7 of the Framework focuses on issues of good design. Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. Policy DM1 of the DMP¹ likewise seeks to protect and enhance local character. Development should, amongst other matters, show an appreciation of the surrounding neighbourhood's historic context, height, massing and materials.
8. The existing front garden to 106 Parker Road and those of the adjacent houses have maintained their original sloping contours and soft landscaping. I accept that the appeal site is not within a designated Conservation Area or an Area of Special Residential Character. Nevertheless, these common features serve to reinforce the established character of the street scene.
9. The removal of much of the front garden area and its replacement by a large, unrelieved expanse of brickwork would be out of proportion with the simple appearance of this modest semi-detached house and wholly at odds with the established character of its surroundings. I am also not convinced that there is any pressing need for the provision of additional on-site parking, given that no. 106 already benefits from a garage to the rear of the property.
10. For all of these reasons, I have found upon the main issue that development as proposed would have an unacceptable visual impact on the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area, contrary to national policy at Chapter 7 of the Framework and Policy DM1 of the DMP.

Other Matters

11. I have been referred in the appellant's grounds of appeal to similar schemes within Hastings where off-street car parking has been provided by excavating much of the front garden. Photographs of these, some of which are within Conservation Areas, have been provided to me. However, I am not aware of the background to those cases and whether or not the properties referred to already possessed garaging or parking facilities on site, as in the subject case.
12. My decision, of necessity, is based upon the material provided to me and the observations made during my site visit.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR

¹ The Hastings Local Plan: Development Management Plan (adopted 23 September 2015).