



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2019

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/19/3222769

13 Truesdales, Ickenham UB10 8FJ

- 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 Ritesh Jain against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 74081/APP/2018/3564, dated 14 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 8 January 2019.
 - The development is retrospective planning application for removal of shrubs in front of the house and replacing it with brindle block paving within the boundaries set for the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Truesdales is a relatively recent residential development laid out with a tightly knit grain. Streets are shared surface and the houses, which are a mix of two and three storeys in height, are located close to the rear of the shared surface carriageway. Front gardens are small and mostly landscaped with hedges and shrubs that seek to soften the expanse of hard surfacing that otherwise dominate Truesdales and neighbouring streets. The approach to these small front garden areas is broadly consistent throughout the estate, suggesting a clear and conscious approach to the role of soft landscaping which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. I saw however that there are exceptions to the rule, and I have carefully noted the examples cited in the appellant's Grounds of Appeal. However, these exceptions merely serve to highlight the significance of the predominant approach to landscaping within the estate and the important contribution that these areas make to the character and appearance of the development.
5. The appellant has already replaced the areas of shrub and hedge planting with brick-paving. Whilst the contrasting kerb line and brick paving serves to distinguish the small garden forecourt area from the shared surface carriageway, it does nothing to lessen the dominance of hard surfacing within the overall streetscene.

6. There is a stated intention to implement hedge lines from potted plants at either side of the property's frontage, but the brick paving would remain across the entirety of this area. Moreover, the two rows of potted plants would fail to replicate the more robust appearance of hedges elsewhere within the estate and erode the otherwise broadly consistent approach to the development's landscaping that is evident elsewhere. The site's location on the inside of the junction of Truesdales and Cunningham Road means that the loss of landscaping is also particularly keenly felt as the street corner loses its definition, whilst the use of potted plants would merely a temporary, transient, attempt to mitigate the loss of more robust planting.
7. Notwithstanding the siting of potted plants, the area would still clearly be hard surfaced. The replacement of green landscaped pockets and areas across the estate with hard surfacing would gradually erode the character and appearance of the housing development; and that character and appearance is finely balanced between the expanses of hard surfacing on the one hand, and strategically placed landscaping which seeks to demonstrate a consistent and coordinated approach to soften these expanses on the other hand.
8. Policy BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies (HLP2) seeks to ensure that new development within residential areas complements or improves the amenity and character of the area, whilst HLP policy BE38 expects proposals to retain and utilise landscaping features of merit and to provide new planting and landscaping wherever appropriate. Whilst the proposal would provide some new planting, it would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area that results as a consequence of the appeal development. The proposal is contrary to HLP policies BE19 and BE38 as a consequence.

Other Matters

9. I have taken into account the appellant's justification for the development. However, whilst I sympathise with these reasons, these personal circumstances are not sufficient to outweigh the harm to character and appearance that I have identified above. Nor has it been demonstrated that other means to address domestic pets fouling the garden forecourt area have been investigated or why the presence of the landscaped forecourt would preclude direct access to the front of the house when it is stated that it is not the intention to use this area as a further car parking area.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matter raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR