
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2019

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/19/3233500

3 Howards Close, Woking, Surrey GU22 9AR

- 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 Reinaldo Cruz against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2019/0472, dated 12 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as a manually operated sliding cantilever driveway gate made from mild steel with 16mm dia. main bars & 12mm dia. dog bars, 50x50 SHS for uprights and frame 50x10mm flat rail bars, 100x50 RHS C/Arm, 70x60mm track with rail heads. 1600mm high from ground level, overall length 6484mm, set back from pavement kerb as shown on drg. PP-002, fitted/retracting behind front hedge and moving across driveway & locating on driveway post.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Howards Close is a short cul-de-sac which accommodates twelve, two storey semi-detached dwellings. The dwellings are set back from the road with garden areas and driveways to the front. There are a variety of boundary treatments to the front of the dwellings with some having low walls, others having low hedgerows and other having no boundary treatment at. All the dwellings have open driveways which results in the prevailing character being one of dwellings with partly open frontages.
4. The front boundary to the of the appeal dwelling has hedgerows to the side and front with an open driveway. The appeal proposal seeks to erect a tall sliding steel gate across the driveway, which would enclose the front garden in its entirety when closed. The full height of the steel gate, which would extend the full width of the driveway, would introduce a design feature that is incompatible with the prevailing character and appearance of the area. It would also unacceptably enclose an open garden area in a street where open frontages prevail.

5. The appellant states that the design is similar to the boundary treatment at No 12, however this boundary treatment is markedly different in that it has an open driveway and the iron railings sit above a low brick wall, interspersed with brick pillars. The appellant also highlights that there are boundary treatments of the same design in the wider area. However, no specific examples have been brought to my attention and, in any event, I have primarily considered this appeal in terms of its impact on Howards Close. The appellant states that the gates would be open for most of the day, that when closed they would minimise the theft of his vehicles and that the development would result in an enclosed area for children to safely play. He also points out that no objections to the proposal have been raised by the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
6. Whilst the occupiers of neighbouring properties may not have objected to the proposal, this does not in itself mean that the proposal is acceptable in design terms. Whilst I do accept that the gates would offer additional security, there may be other alternative security options that could be explored by the appellant including the use of CCTV. Whilst the gates may allow children to play to the front of the property in a safer environment, I note that there is a private garden to the rear of the property. None of the above matters are in any event sufficient to outweigh the significant harm that would be caused by the proposal to the character and appearance of the area.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would result in an incongruous form of development which would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012; the Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document 2015, and chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which require, amongst other things, that development make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of area and leads to the creation of high quality places.

Conclusions

8. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR