
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by M Harris BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J1725/W/19/3227018

2 Heston Walk, Gosport PO12 2RW

- 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 Robert & Shirley Drew & Booth against the decision of Gosport Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00014/FULL, dated 15 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is retention of area of hardstanding adjacent to front garden and retrospective change of use of land to form off-road parking space.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Robert Drew and Mrs Shirley Booth against Gosport Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The description of development in the banner heading reflects the Council's decision notice and the appeal form/the appellants supporting evidence. I have adopted this wording as it is a better description of the proposal and has clearly been agreed by the parties to be a more accurate representation.
4. The planning application was made in the name of Mr & Mrs Robert & Shirley Drew & Booth. Whilst the appeal form and supporting evidence refers to Mr Robert Drew only, the associated costs application cites both parties and as such I have proceeded to determine the appeal in the names of both parties.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - i. the effect of the proposal on the character of the street scene and verdant character of the area with regard to the loss of soft landscaping; and
 - ii. the safe and efficient operation of the adjacent highway.

Reasons

Character of the area

6. Heston Walk is a pedestrian footway connecting St Helens Road with Monroe Close. It is fronted by a small number of dwellings with open plan gardens fronting an area of soft landscaping. The wider surroundings include similar arrangements together with short cul-de-sacs accessed from St Helens Road which serves as an arterial route. The broader area is characterised as an open estate of housing with dwellings set back from the road, limited enclosure to front gardens/between properties and areas of open space formed of soft landscaping.
7. The proposal seeks to retain an area of hard landscaping to the front of the property, beyond the formal garden area, for use as an off-road parking space. The evidence indicates that the paving has been completed as permitted development and that an approval to provide a dropped kerb to access the area has been granted by the highway authority.
8. The character of Heston Walk is one of openness; the absence of vehicles from the front of dwellings is notable. Whilst the area of green space lost is relatively small, and in light of this has a limited impact on the grassed area available for public enjoyment, the effect of introducing paving in front of the existing line of gardens does alter the verdant character of the area and the established street scene. When utilised for its intended purpose, the presence of a parked vehicle would have an enclosing effect, and whilst not permanent, this would be markedly different from the existing situation.
9. The evidence cites other properties in the locality where development has resulted in the loss of green space. I do not have the specific details of these before me however it is clear from my site visit that the detailed circumstances differ, principally by virtue of the range of different layouts present in the area. As such, in my view the proposals are not comparable and I have therefore placed no weight on these in reaching my decision.
10. Notwithstanding the potential for works to be permitted development, in my judgement the proposal would cause harm to the character of the street scene and verdant character of the area with regard to the loss of soft landscaping, contrary to Policy LP10 of the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted October 2015) (the Local Plan) insofar as it seeks to protect the character and quality of the local area.

Highways impact

11. The proposal seeks to retain paving for use as a parking space away from the public highway. The evidence indicates that the installation of a dropped kerb has been approved albeit at the time of my visit this had not been implemented.
12. Notwithstanding the approval of a dropped kerb, gaining access to the parking space would require vehicles to cross the pavement. Further, owing to the alignment of the paving/parking area, any manoeuvring to gain access would almost certainly result in turning on the area of shared landscaped space.
13. The effect of this manoeuvring would conflict with the pavement and purpose of the landscaped area owing to the introduction of vehicles into a space

where, given the design of the wider area, they would not ordinarily be expected to be present. Whilst I acknowledge that as a local resident the appellant would take due care and attention, this is not something which can be relied upon in planning terms.

14. Finally, it is suggested that the approval of the parking space would result in an overall increase in parking. Notwithstanding whether residents use the available garage block, the presence of a dropped kerb would remove the ability for parking on the highway in that location and therefore, at best, the effect on available parking spaces would be neutral.
15. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the highway and conflict with Policy LP23 of the Local Plan insofar as it seeks to protect the highway.
16. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

M Harris

INSPECTOR