



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2020

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/19/3241563

36 Bramley Close, Twickenham TW2 7EU

- 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 Robert Little against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/1714/FUL, dated 30 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'revision of parking arrangement within the curtilage of the site'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the revision of the parking arrangements within the curtilage of the site at 36 Bramley Close, Twickenham TW2 7EU, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 19/1714/FUL, dated 30 May 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site encompasses the front garden of a pair of flats located towards the end of Bramley Close, a residential cul-de-sac characterised by properties of a similar appearance set in discernible building lines. As such, there is a clear harmony and rhythm to the composition of the street scene. The front gardens of the properties in Bramley Close have a variable appearance due to the different surface treatments and frontage enclosure and the extent of soft landscaping. However, save for a few notable exceptions, the front gardens do not generally include parking areas. This adds to the continuity of the street scene. The front garden of the appeal property includes a lawned area set behind a fence and separated from the concrete drive by a low brick wall. In combination with the adjoining front garden, the appeal site adds a pleasant area of greenery to the street scene.
4. The appeal scheme proposes an extension of the existing hard standing in order to create a parking space in the lawned area. This would erode the area of soft landscaping to the front of the flats and result in visual clutter, as a car would be parked directly in front of the building.

5. That said, the area of landscaping lost would amount to a small section of lawn, as opposed to a tree or hedging. This loss would not have a notable impact on the street scene. Significantly, the appeal scheme would retain frontage enclosure, an area of soft landscaping between the parking space and pavement and space for landscaping between the parking space and the front elevation of the flats. Thus, there would be space for hedges, shrubs and even a tree. This would soften the presence of the extended hard surface as well as any cars parked upon it. The proposal also presents an opportunity to resurface the concrete driveway with a more attractive material.
6. There is already a dropped kerb to the appeal site and therefore vehicles can already be parked forward of the flats, albeit to the side rather than directly in front. Such vehicles would be prominent in views along the cul-de-sac. Therefore, the visual clutter caused by a vehicle parked in the additional parking space would not be harmful in this context.
7. The alterations would permit space for three vehicles to park off road at the appeal site and if this were to occur the frontage could appear cluttered. However, a third car would 'park in' one of the occupants of the flats and thus undermine the improvement to living conditions the application is seeking to achieve. This being independent access for the residents of the two flats without relying on a high level of cooperation. As such, it is unlikely three cars would be parked at the appeal site. Notwithstanding this, the appellant has suggested that a planning condition could be imposed to limit parking to only two cars. I see no reason to disagree, as this would prevent a harmful level of visual clutter being caused by the presence of three parked cars.
8. The appeal scheme would also afford an opportunity for a properly designed off road parking solution. This is because the presence of the existing dropped kerb presents a risk that cars could simply be parked on the existing lawn (if the low wall was removed) and therefore a more ad hoc parking arrangement could be created, similar to that at 32-34 Bramley Close, where the lawned area has been given over to gravel. The appeal scheme on the other hand would provide a single surface treatment.
9. The Council has an SPD¹ concerned with front garden parking. This does not prohibit the provision of parking spaces in front of properties. It instead provides design guidance and principles in order to secure minimum visual intrusion and maximise opportunities for continuity by, for example, retaining and providing high levels of landscaping. The space that would be available for hedge and tree planting would echo the composition of other front gardens and enable a sense of continuity to be retained. In some respects, the front garden at the appeal scheme, even with the parking space, would have more landscaping than other elsewhere in the street. As such, the proposal would not be at odds with the aims of the SPD.
10. In conclusion, the appeal scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the area and therefore a conflict with Policy LP1 of the Local Plan 2018 would not occur, as this seeks to secure development that responds to the context, character and appearance of the area.

¹ Front Garden and Other Off-Street Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2006

Other Matters

11. Although not a discrete reason for refusal, the Council has raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on highway safety. Nevertheless, Bramley Close is a lightly trafficked cul-de-sac. It is narrow and short and therefore vehicles are unlikely to be travelling along it at speed. Forward Visibility is generally good even though there is on street parking. As such, a vehicle entering or exiting the appeal site, even if reversing, is unlikely to present a hazard to road users, who would be able to see and react to it. The appeal site currently has no turning area so cars will already reverse into and out of the driveway. There is nothing before me to suggest this has been a problem. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not be detrimental to highway safety.

Conditions

12. I have had regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guide and the conditions suggested by the Council. It is necessary in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area to ensure that the development is undertaken in accordance with the drawings originally submitted² and that a scheme of hard and soft landscaping is approved. To prevent visual clutter, it is necessary to impose a condition limiting the number of vehicles parked at the appeal site to two.

Conclusion

13. The appeal scheme would adhere to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should succeed.

Graham Chamberlain
INSPECTOR

² I have not conditioned the amended plan contained in the appendix to the appellant's statement of case as this has not been recommended by the Council and is unnecessary as the scheme as originally proposed is acceptable

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than wholly in accordance with Drawing Nos: 051119/LP01, 051119/PR01, 051119/SP01, HB53971/X01; received by the local planning authority on the 30 May 2019.
3. No part of the development shall be occupied until full details of both hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include proposed finished levels; means of enclosure; car parking layouts and hard surfacing materials.

Soft landscape works shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); detailing the quantity, density, size, species, position and the proposed time or programme of planting of all shrubs, hedges and grasses together with an indication of how they integrate with the proposal in the long term with regard to their mature size and anticipated routine maintenance. All tree, shrub and hedge planting included within that specification shall be carried out in accordance with BS 3936:1986 (Parts 1, 1992, Nursery Stock, Specification for trees and shrubs, and 4, 1984, Specification for forest trees); BS 4043: 1989, Transplanting root-balled trees; and BS 4428:1989, Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces).

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and in any event prior to the occupation of any part of the development.

4. No more than two cars/vans shall be parked within the application site at any one time.