



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/20/3251509

133 Halls Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4QD

- 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 John Partridge against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01826/HOUSE, dated 10 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'new carport and store over existing parking spaces to the front garden of the existing property'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the development described as 'new carport and store over existing parking spaces to the front garden of the existing property' at 133 Halls Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4QD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/01826/HOUSE, dated 10 July 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 475-02-00-P, 475-02-01-P, 475-02-10-P, 475-03-10-P, 475-05-01-P, 475-05-02-P, and 1222-01.
 - 3) No development or other operations shall take place until details of the proposed foundation design, access, hard surfacing, drainage, soakaways and services providing for the protection of the root zones of trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) No development or other operations shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of an arboricultural watching brief in accordance with a written scheme of site monitoring, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area including trees.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is occupied by a large, detached, two-storey dwelling set back from the highway within a residential area. The front garden is long and has a verdant character due to the large mature trees and lawns that flank the driveway. This is an arrangement that is typical of the character and appearance for this part of Halls Road.
4. Along the side of the driveway the appeal property has a number of paved parking spaces under the canopy of several trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)¹. These trees positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Given the existence of hard standing for parking of vehicles I consider that there is likely to be existing pressure on the trees. For example, the hard standing may reduce water and nutrient intake to the roots of the trees. Furthermore, in order to avoid leaf, mast and twig fall directly onto parked vehicles, owners may desire the removal of the trees.
5. The proposed car port and store would not result in any significant additional loss of water or nutrient intake to the trees given the presence of the existing hard standing. Water is currently taken away to a surface drain and the parking spaces appear well maintained, for example by sweeping. Water and organic matter would fall on the roof of the structure much like they currently fall on the existing hard standing. Moreover, the provision of the car port would provide protection to parked vehicles beneath from the leaf, mast and twig fall. The building is of a functional design, specifically for this purpose and as such, would likely reduce the desire for significant works to the trees, even having regard to potential physical damage as the trees grow.
6. Within its reasons for refusal the Council have not raised any issue with the construction of the building impacting on the trees or their roots directly. In the event of my being minded to allow the appeal I note that the Council have recommended a number of conditions seeking to protect the retained trees. I find that in principle such conditions are reasonable and necessary in order to ensure that the roots are not damaged through the course of any development. I also note the appellant's plans indicate options for the final foundation design. Subject to tree protection, in light of the evidence available to me I have exercised a planning judgement. In this specific context, I find that the proposal would not be likely to harm the trees, despite its close proximity to them.
7. Along this part of Halls Road I have observed a number of detached, pitched-roofed garages forwardmost of the houses, including both properties either side of the appeal site. These are quite visible from the highway. Whilst the proposal would be set further forward than these examples, they do set a context for detached buildings within the front gardens. Furthermore, the proposal has a flat roof form and would be partially open, helping to mitigate any visual presence. Additionally, the walls would be timber clad reflecting the existing boundary fencing and treed context. As such, I find that the proposal would assimilate well with the character and appearance of the area. It would be set back several metres beyond the existing front boundary wall and railings. As such, it would not appear prominent or have an urbanising effect but would maintain a leafy suburban appearance.

¹ Tree Preservation Order No. 201/21/0434

8. Therefore, in conclusion on the main issue I find that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area including trees. As such, the proposal would not conflict with Policies ADPP1, CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document, Adopted July 2012, the Quality Design – West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document – Part 2, Residential Development or Area Design Focus, Hall Road/The Meadway/New Lane Hill, Tilehurst, or the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies and guidance seek to ensure that development respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area through high quality and sustainable design.

Other matter

9. I have noted the objection from Tilehurst Parish Council concerned with the lack of information regarding the size of the proposal. However, I have found that the scaled drawings provide the necessary detail.

Conditions and conclusions

10. I have had careful regard to the Council's list of suggested conditions which includes requirements for further details to be agreed prior to any commencement of works. I have provided the appellant, without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal, opportunity to make comment on these. However, no response has been received.
11. I have imposed the standard implementation and approved plans conditions in order to define the terms of the permission. Furthermore, I have imposed the suggested conditions from the Council's arboriculturist relating to tree protection, adding a requirement for details on the foundation design. This is unlikely to come as a surprise to the appellant given the nature of the works and the proximity of the TPO trees. These conditions are in the interests of protecting retained trees and the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, requiring the information prior to commencement would assist with the efficient and effective delivery of the development.
12. However, I do not consider that further landscaping is necessary in order for the proposal to be acceptable. Additionally, save for the store area, the proposal does not seek to amend the existing access, parking or turning space at the site. As such, I do not find that the suggested highway condition is necessary.
13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR