



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 October 2020

by P B Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/20/3248820
33 Hillingdon Road, Gravesend, DA11 7LQ.

- 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 Mrs Denise Booker against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20191098, dated 14 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is the creation of a vehicular access and hardstanding in the front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a terraced property of Edwardian age. It is located in a road of similar age and style properties, mainly terraces. The majority of those which lie in the eastern half of the road have hardstanding areas within the front gardens providing off street parking. Conversely, the majority of the properties in the western half of the street do not. The front garden areas of these properties are predominantly at a higher level than the road and pavement with front retaining walls. These walls are higher towards the far western end of the road reflecting the slope of the road. The majority of these front gardens are retained as such with a variety of lawned areas and other vegetation, giving the road an attractive 'green' appearance compared to the eastern half. There are also a number of street trees.
4. The front boundary of the appeal site is marked by a low stone wall behind which is a raised level lawned area; there is a single bush just under the front bay window. Steps lead up to the front door with a further narrow strip of lawn between these and the steps of the neighbouring property.
5. The proposal would involve the excavation of the existing front garden, including removal of the wall, the lawned areas and steps, and its replacement with a single large hardstanding area across the whole width and depth of the site frontage. It would have a gentle gradient to reflect the difference in levels between the road and the front of the dwelling.

6. I consider that, given the character of this part of the street scene, in particular that it is within that part of the street which remains relatively unspoilt in terms of its more vegetated character compared to the eastern end of the street, the proposed hardstanding would introduce an unacceptably harsh feature that would detract from that established character.
7. I appreciate that the proposal would enable the residents of the property to park their car off-street but the benefit to be gained by that is not outweighed by the considerable adverse impact that the proposal would have on the visual appearance and character of the street. The extent of the proposed hardstanding area would leave no room for any vegetation to be retained or for new areas to be created that might mitigate some of this harm.
8. I therefore find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) which seeks to ensure that new development is visually attractive, conserves the character of the built environment and integrates well with the surrounding area.
9. For the reasons given above it would also fail to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework in particular paragraph 127 which, amongst other things, seeks the creation of high quality places and buildings, sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Conclusions

10. I therefore conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR