



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2021

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/21/3275703

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 Denise Booker against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 20210278 dated 4 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is formation of a vehicular access and a hardstanding in the front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the application was determined, the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) has been revised in July 2021. However, I do not consider that the changes directly affect the appeal proposal before me, but all references are to the July 2021 version.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mid-terraced property on the southern side of Hillingdon Road. Although there are a few exceptions, including the adjoining property at No 35, the majority of the houses on the south side of the road, from No 41 (descending in numbers) onwards in a westerly direction have retained their front gardens. Where the front gardens remain, the houses are generally set higher than the road and so the front gardens are retained by attractive boundary walls with steps leading up across the front garden areas to the houses.
5. Conversely, and again with a few exceptions, on the north side of the road many of the houses are more level with the road or only slightly higher, and have turned their front gardens into hardstanding for vehicles. There is therefore a very distinctly different character and appearance to the different parts of the road. Nonetheless, the part of the road including the appeal

property retains a coherent pattern of development, providing a softer and more verdant frontage to the street scene.

6. The proposal follows on from an earlier refusal by the Council and upheld at appeal to create a vehicular access with hardstanding. I have been provided with a copy of the appeal decision under Ref: APP/K2230/W/20/3248820. This proposal would be similar in that it would require the removal of most of the boundary wall and the gradation of the land between the house and the highway and pavement with the creation of the hardstanding but would seek to introduce planting along both side boundaries to soften the appearance of the hardstanding, but the hardstanding would still be the dominant feature.
7. I consider that the introduction of the hardstanding would interrupt the pattern of development in this part of the street. It would detract from the softer and more verdant character and appearance of the street scene which is prevalent along this part of the street. Whilst the additional planting would assist, it would not in my view be sufficient to overcome the harm I have found and the hardstanding would dominate the frontage and be visually intrusive in the street scene.
8. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the street scene. This would conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and the Framework and in particular Section 12, all of which seek a high standard of design which respects the local context.

Other Considerations

9. I have sympathy with the Appellants reasons for seeking the off street parking space, and the Appellant has indicated a reduction in the availability of on street parking but no further information has been provided in this regard. The Appellant has also referred to the need to undertake repair works to the front boundary wall, which it is indicated are like others in the road which are also in need of repair, but that in itself would not necessarily require its removal. There is also a reference to the likelihood of more hard landscaping being introduced but my decision is based on the situation at the time of my site visit.
10. The Council has drawn my attention to a further appeal decision relating to a similar proposal on the same side of the road, which was dismissed in January 2021 under Ref: APP/K2230/D/20/3249712. I have also considered at the same time an appeal for a hardstanding at another property in the same street. Each proposal must be assessed on its individual merits but I see nothing contradictory in the assessment I have reached in respect of this particular appeal in the context of these other decisions.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR