
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2021

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/21/3282596

7 Forge Lane, Gravesend, Kent, England, DA12 4DS

- 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 Miss Pamela Hartley against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20210799, dated 15 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is construction of front driveway and dropped kerb.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached property that is located in a road comprising of mainly semi-detached or terraced dwellings. The majority of dwellings on the western side of the road have hardstanding areas within the front gardens providing off street parking. However, Nos 1-9 (odd) Forge Lane, including the appeal site, which are located on the eastern side of road, do not.
4. Nos 1-9 (odd) Forge Lane are set behind front gardens which are at a higher level than the road and pavement with front retaining walls and steps leading up to the dwellings. These front gardens mostly comprise of lawned areas, which together with other vegetation, gives this part of the road an attractive 'green' appearance. This is in contrast to the frontage of most of the other dwellings in the road which are more dominated by hardsurfacing and are not elevated to the same extent as the appeal property and adjacent dwellings.
5. The front boundary of the appeal site comprises of a retaining brick wall of about 700mm, with a raised lawned area above. Steps, with associated retaining walls, lead up to the front door of the dwelling. There is also a landscaped strip between the steps and associated pathway and the neighbouring dwelling.
6. The proposal would involve the excavation of most of the existing front garden, including the removal of the majority of the front wall, steps, and lawned area,

to be replaced by a single hardstanding area comprising permeable block paving with an area of approximately 4.93m depth, by 5.3m wide. New steps are also proposed leading from the new driveway up to the front door, together with retaining walls to the boundary and immediately to the front of the front bay. The driveway would slope to reflect the difference in levels between the road and the front of the dwelling.

7. The front garden of the appeal property, together with the adjoining raised gardens, contribute positively to the established street scene and provide the dwellings with an attractive setting. In my view, the proposed hardstanding on elevated land, together with the retaining walls would introduce an unacceptably harsh feature that would significantly detract from the green and landscaped character of this part of the Forge Lane and would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. Whilst I acknowledge that the landscape strip between the existing steps and the neighbouring dwelling would be retained, this would not satisfactorily mitigate the harm caused by the proposal.
8. I appreciate that the proposal would enable the occupiers of the dwelling to park their car off-street in an area where on-street parking can be difficult and inconvenient. I also note that the appellant intends to replace the existing front wall and steps regardless of the outcome of this appeal, However I do not consider this to be a 'fallback' position for the appeal proposal. These considerations do not outweigh the considerable adverse impact that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.
9. In conclusion, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene and as such would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014). This policy requires new development to make a positive contribution to the street scene, public realm and the character of the area. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) as it would not add to the overall quality of the area.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR