



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2021

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/21/3281714

126 Woodfield Drive, East Barnet, Barnet, EN4 8PB

- 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 and Mrs McMorro against the decision of The London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 21/0854/HSE, dated 15 February 2021 was refused by notice dated 16 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations to front garden to form vehicular hardstanding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have noted that the description of the proposal on both the Council's decision notice and the appeal form differs from that given on the planning application form. The convention is to use the description on the application form unless it is inaccurate. That is not the case with this proposal. However, in reaching my decision, I have considered the erection of boundary walls and the staircase as part of the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, which is situated in a suburban residential area. The property is one of a group of dwellings that are laid out in a crescent shape facing a mini-roundabout. The property sits at a higher level than the road with a terraced front garden and steps leading to the front door. There is no off-street parking at the front of the property and I observed at my site visit that space for parking on the highway are limited.
5. I also noted that many frontages on Woodfield Drive and on nearby Uplands Road have been hard-surfaced to provide off-street parking. In particular, I have taken into account the examples shown in the photographs attached to the appellants' personal statement, including the nearby example at number 134 Woodfield Drive. Whilst these are a material consideration, I have not been provided with the detailed planning history of these and the

circumstances in which they were permitted (if they were) is not before me. As a consequence, I can only afford them very limited weight in reaching my decision.

6. The proposal is to create parking space within the existing front garden area. This would involve the construction of retaining walls and a new staircase. Fencing would be erected on top of the walls and steps and a small garden area would be retained immediately in front of the dwelling.
7. The Council considers that the proposal would conflict with Policy DM01 of the Local Plan Development Management Policies 2012 and Policy CS5 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2012. These policies seek to ensure a high standard of design and to protect the character of the area. I consider these to be consistent with the provisions of paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework), which also states (amongst other things) that developments should be sympathetic to local character and be visually attractive.
8. I have also taken into account the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: – Residential Design Guidance 2016 (SPD). In particular, I note that it states that front gardens contribute positively to the character of streetscapes and to the setting of individual groups of properties.
9. I acknowledge that there would be benefits to the appellants and their family by having off-street parking within their residential boundary, particularly at times when there is competition for on-street parking space. However, the existing front garden area and those of the neighbouring dwellings that face the roundabout, provide a soft and verdant appearance to this section of Woodfield Drive. The retaining walls and fencing would result in a stark, engineered appearance that would significantly change the appearance of the property to the detriment of this part of the streetscene.
10. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would conflict with both the provisions of the Development Plan and the Framework, as referred to above.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR