



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2022

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7TH March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/21/3288644

37 Scott Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 5TU

- 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 Nina Botten against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20210852, dated 21 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as application for vehicle access and hardstanding area to the front of property.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The proposed crossover would be sited on land outside the ownership or control of the appellant. The appellant has suggested that the proposed crossover could be surfaced with a membrane which allows grass to grow through it. This proposed change would have a material impact on the appearance and maintenance of the crossover and has not been formally considered by the Council, the highway authority, or third parties. As such, it is not something that can be taken into account in the consideration of the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located within a cul-de-sac in Scott Road, which comprises 16 terraced houses arranged around a central green, turning head and an on-street parking area for up to five cars. Vehicle access within the cul-de-sac is via a narrow single lane road, which is flanked by wide verges which slope up from the road. These verges project up to the parking and turning areas at the end of the cul-de-sac. As with other parts of Scott Road grass verges are a feature which make a positive contribution to the spacious, open and suburban character and appearance of the locality.

5. Within the locality there are a number of narrow vehicular accesses with limited passing and turning areas, which serve parking spaces located within a number of the rear gardens. There are also a number of dwellings in the locality that have vehicle crossovers and parking within their front gardens and this includes one of the dwellings adjacent to the turning area within the cul-de-sac. Notwithstanding this, it is evident that there is considerable pressure for on-street parking spaces in the immediate and wider area.
6. Within Scott Road the verge areas immediately adjacent to the parking and turning areas at the end of the cul-de-sac are clearly used for parking and are damaged as a result. The verge next to the turning head has hardcore laid on it to provide a hard parking surface and the existing grass verge next to the parking area was rutted, partially devoid of grass and in use for parking at the time of the appeal site visit. This area of verge sits to the side of the appeal property and is where the proposed crossover is proposed.
7. Elsewhere within Scott Road there is considerable on-street parking with cars straddling or sitting completely on the pavement. This parking has a degrading and enclosing impact on the street scene and reflects the pressure for accessible parking spaces in the locality.
8. Together and amongst other things Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS), require new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and that it should conserve and enhance the character of the local built environment. There should be no loss of biodiversity and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought.
9. Paragraphs 126, 130 & 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework), state that proposals should function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Development should be sympathetic to local character and maintain a strong sense of place, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate change. Proposals should minimise impacts on and provide net biodiversity gains. Also, that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places in which people live.
10. The proposed crossover would be at least five metres wide, with wider splays in the vicinity of the proposed dropped kerb. As stated by the Council the proposed parking area would be 6.6 metres deep and 5.32 metres wide. Together with the existing/proposed concrete access paths, the proposal would fill the northern half the front garden, leaving little space for soft landscaping. For these reasons the proposal would be visually hard and would have an urbanising impact on the setting of the host dwelling and the street scene, which includes the central green and the properties around it. This harm is not something that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
11. Whilst it is noted that the appellant has stated that new planting could take place no details are provided. Without such details it is not possible to assess whether it would mitigate the harm caused both to the character and appearance of the street scene and the loss of soft landscaping and associated biodiversity.

12. It is acknowledged that there are a considerable number of crossovers in the locality. They have blended into the street scene with varying degrees of success, depending on their width, length, soft landscaping and siting within or adjacent to the grass verges. In this instance due to its width, depth and absence of soft planting the proposed crossover and driveway would fail to respect and blend in appropriately with the character and appearance of the street scene.
13. Overall, the harm that would be caused by the proposal would outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the proposed on-site parking, as well as the associated reduction in the pressure for on-street parking spaces.
14. Finally, I am satisfied that surface water drainage within the garden area could be satisfactorily dealt with by conditions.
15. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene. It would therefore conflict with CS Policies CS12 & CS19 and paragraphs 126, 130 & 174 of the Framework.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR