



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2023

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/22/3310805

Winterbrook, Oakfield Lane, Dartford DA1 2TE

- 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 Lorraine Prutton against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/22/00233/FUL, dated 28 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as the "*construction of two drives to the frontage*"
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development described on the application drawings has been carried out. This appeal therefore relates to an application for retrospective planning permission.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposals on: (i) the character and appearance of the street scene, and (ii) highway safety.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached house that has recently been enlarged and re-modelled. It is situated on a steeply sloping site, a significant distance below the level of Oakfield Lane. Neighbouring properties include hard landscaping at the front and therefore this part of Oakfield Lane is dominated by parked cars which makes it more urban in appearance than other parts of the road.
5. There is a garage at the front of the appeal property that, prior to the appeal scheme being carried out, was accessed via a concrete ramp and a dropped kerb on the road's edge. This, together with an area of brick paving adjacent to the road, provided off-street car parking spaces for occupiers of the appeal property. The brick paved area occupied roughly half of the street frontage with the other half comprising a vegetated verge, which the appellant advises was subject to subsidence.

6. The appeal scheme comprises 2 elements. A retaining wall has been erected and the former verge area has been hard-landscaped to form an area of hardstanding. In the position of the vehicular access to the driveway and garage, a platform has been constructed using scaffolding poles and timber to provide space for up to 3 cars, arranged at right angles to the road.

Character and Appearance

7. Due to its siting, design and materials the scaffolding and timber parking structure is an entirely alien and incongruous addition to the street scene. In addition, the replacement of the vegetated verge area with hard-landscaping has had an urbanising effect on the appearance of the frontage of the property. Together, and individually, due to their siting, size, design and materials these works have had an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the street scene.
8. For these reasons the appeal scheme fails to comply with Policies DP2 and DP7 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan (2017) (DDPP) which, amongst other matters, require development to comprise good design which responds to and retains local character, with consideration given to how the height, mass, scale, siting and material of proposals relate to neighbouring buildings and the wider locality.

Highway Safety

9. The information before me indicates that the arrangement prior to the installation of the platform parking area allowed 2 or 3 cars to park within the appeal site and no scope existed for cars to turn within the site so that they could enter and leave the site in forward gear. The same is the case with the parking platform in place. Compared to the original situation, which I note could be reinstated, there is no worsening in highway safety resulting from cars entering and leaving the platform parking area.
10. Kent County Council Highways have objected to the formation of a dropped kerb to enable access to the area of concrete hardstanding. Whilst I note that this area may be of sufficient size to accommodate a car parked parallel to the road, the appeal scheme does not include the provision of a dropped kerb to allow this to occur. As such I attribute limited weight to the Highways objection.
11. For these reasons I am satisfied that the appeal scheme does not have an unacceptable effect on highway safety. It therefore accords with the aims of DDPP Policies DP2 and DP4.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out under the first main issue, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole

INSPECTOR