



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 May 2023

by **L McKay MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/22/3303242

16 Willow Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6LW

- 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 Victoria Minchin against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00712/HHOLD, dated 27 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as "A cover at the back of our shed at the bottom of the garden. The cover is comprised of plastic corrugated material to create a simple cover for the small area."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The structure shown on the plans before me comprises timber uprights and a clear corrugated plastic roof forming a covered area. This is already in place. The structure covers a skate ramp, which is mentioned as 'equipment' in the description of development and does not appear to be attached to the structure. It does not therefore form part of the development for which permission is sought in this appeal. Fabric covers one wall, but is described by the appellant as temporary, therefore I have not considered it as part of this appeal. A climbing wall, formed of timber with climbing holds added, is attached to part of the rear and side of the structure, forming solid walls at these points. Although not on the plans it is nevertheless part of the structure, and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
3. The description in the header above is taken from the application form. The form also includes details of the process leading to it being constructed and its purpose, however these do not describe the development itself, therefore I have not included them.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The structure is built up to the side boundaries of the site and is considerably taller than the shed in front of it. While it is significantly smaller than the nearby dwellings and the tall trees behind it, the structure is noticeably taller than the other outbuildings and garden structures nearby. The front and part of

the sides of the structure are open and it has a clear roof, however the timber framework is clearly visible. Consequently, while it does appear as a lightweight structure, it is nonetheless conspicuously visible from the appeal site and neighbouring gardens, with vegetation providing little screening from these directions. It therefore appears as an incongruous feature.

6. The structure is not constructed of high-quality materials, so it does not have a high-quality appearance. There are other outbuildings and structures in the area of varying design and quality, however these are generally lower in height and may not have required planning permission. They are not therefore directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
7. The structure is not visible from Willow Road due to intervening outbuildings, and the substantial trees at the rear prevent all but glimpsed views from the grounds of the flats behind. Its position at the rear of the site also limits its visual impact. Nevertheless, due to its height, width and materials it results in modest harm to the appearance of the immediate area.
8. The character of the area remains residential, with the predominant pattern of development unaffected. Therefore, the structure does not affect local distinctiveness. It has also had a limited impact on surrounding vegetation, most of which is outside of the appeal site.
9. Accordingly, the structure harms the appearance but not the character of the immediate area. For the reasons above, it conflicts with Policy DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (2019) (DMP) insofar as it expects new development to be of high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings; use high quality materials; and have due regard to the layout, scale, massing and height of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

10. I appreciate that the structure provides a covered area for the appellant's family to pursue their sporting hobbies and has been located away from neighbours to reduce its impact. However, it has not been demonstrated that a structure of this overall scale and materials is necessary to provide the weather protection needed, or that the same aims could not be achieved through a less harmful development.
11. It is unfortunate that the appellant was not aware of the need for planning permission, and that the Council may not have carried out a site visit at the time of the application. However, that does not justify the harm I have identified, having visited the site.

Conclusion

12. The development conflicts with the DMP read as a whole, and there are no material considerations that justify granting permission contrary to the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR