



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2023

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/23/3319852

10 Grovehill Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6PJ

- 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 Graham Reid against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02362/HHOLD, dated 25 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a basement extension, small first floor extension, roof alterations and front drive parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a basement extension, small first floor extension, roof alterations and front drive parking space at 10 Grovehill Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6PJ in accordance with the terms of the application, 22/02362/HHOLD, dated 25 October 2022 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions: -
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans; D01 Rev 3, D02 Rev3, D03 Rev 3, D04 Rev3, D05 Rev 3, D06 Rev 3, D07 Rev 5, D08 Rev3 and D09 Rev 5.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extensions and roof alterations hereby approved shall match those of the existing dwelling.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans further details of the hard and soft landscaping of the front retaining walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of the width and depth of the planters, a schedule of plants, and hard surfacing materials. The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before the parking space is brought into use and maintained thereafter.

Preliminary Matter

2. The proposal comprises a number of elements, however, the Council's concerns are restricted to the alterations to the frontage to create the parking space. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment on the other aspects and therefore my considerations focus on the matter in dispute.

3. When I visited the site extensive refurbishment works were taking place to the property which had been enclosed by hoarding. I was however able to view the frontage through the opening to the hoarding and from various vantage points along the road due to the variation in levels.
4. During the application process amended plans D07 Rev 5 and D09 Rev 5 were submitted. Whilst the Council did not find that these overcame their concerns they have been reviewed by the Council and primarily relate to hard and soft landscaping details. Therefore, whilst they are not listed on the decision notice as the plans on which the application was determined I do not consider there would be any prejudice in accepting these plans and I have therefore considered those amended plans as part of the proposal.

Main Issues

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the Linkfield Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. The detached property is set back and elevated from the road. As I observed on my site visit many of the properties along this part of Grovehill Road utilise the frontage for parking. Due to the topography, the form of the parking and the need for, and the height of, the retaining walls varies. There is also a range of properties with extensive arrangements of steps to the front or where the frontage is completely formed of hardstanding. While some properties retain front gardens these are more limited, and again the height of the retaining walls along the front boundary vary and are quite substantial in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site.
7. The parallel parking space would be created by cutting into the site. Due to the significant change in levels, a high retaining wall would be constructed to the rear of the parking space, with steps along the western edge to provide access to the property. The layout and form would not be dissimilar to that of the neighbouring property (No.8). I accept that these types of engineering works can have a hard and stark appearance, it is however evident that the appellant has sought to address these concerns and during the application process revised the scheme to introduce some landscaping.
8. I understand the Council's reservations in relation to the temporary nature of the use of plastic pots, and whilst baskets to the railings with flowering plants would be attractive these are more of a personal addition, rather than part of a strategic landscaping scheme and to be retained as such. Be that as it may, the proposal includes the provision of planting within the rear and side walls. The appellant has also indicated as part of the appeal that the width of the wall planters to the side could be increased to the same as the rear. This increase would ensure that they are sufficient for meaningful planting and could be accommodated with the space required to accommodate a vehicle retained. This is not currently shown on the plans but would be a minor change and does not alter the overall form of the development. Therefore, in my opinion, could be addressed through a condition.
9. While the Council have sought in-ground planting the approach taken reflects other schemes nearby. The elevated planting would also provide some visual relief when the parking space is occupied, and the planting would also be

protected from vehicle movements. Given the limitation of the size of the site and the change in levels, the proposed scheme would provide a balance between the practicalities and use of the space for parking and some softening to alleviate the appearance of the substantial retaining wall.

10. The appeal site lies adjacent to the Linkfield Street Conservation Area (LSCA) and in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 special attention is to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. I have not been provided with any specific details of the LSCA but from what I observed its significance is derived from the architectural and historical interest of the Victorian/Georgian buildings.
11. The villa buildings on the corner of Grovehill Road and Ridgeway Road which are part of the LSCA and immediately adjacent to the appeal site, do have strong landscaped front boundaries with hedging above the wall. Nonetheless, in my view, there is a distinction between the street scene of Grovehill Road to the east in which the appeal site is located and that to the west which lies within the LSCA. Having regard to the urban character of the surrounding area, and the nature of other driveways in the vicinity, I do not consider that the proposal would unduly change the setting of the LSCA. Additionally, the proposal is part of an investment which is making a range of alterations to the property, which from the information before me was in need of repair and refurbishment. I also saw on my site visit that parking along Grovehill Road is restrictive with vehicles parking partially on the footpath which hinders both pedestrian and vehicular movements. Thereby the off-street parking and enhancements to the property's appearance also provide other benefits.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area or the significance of the LSCA as a whole. Thus, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policies DES1 and NHE9 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019, and the design and conservation provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. Together these promote high-quality design which respects the character of the area and the preservation of heritage assets.

Other Matters

13. The reason for refusal also refers to the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy but does not identify any specific policies. Given the more strategic nature of that plan and my findings in relation to the detailed policies, it is unlikely that there would be a conflict with the objectives of the Core Strategy.

Conditions

14. Conditions are necessary in the interests of compliance with statutory requirements relating to the commencement of development and certainty in relation to the plans. In the interest of the appearance of the property and the character of the area, it is necessary to secure the materials in relation to the extensions which also form part of this proposal. The form of the walls and accommodated landscaping is integral to the appearance of the scheme, and therefore, as referenced above, I have added a condition requiring details of the hard and soft landscaping to be agreed with the Council. Whilst some planting details were provided in the appellant's appeal statement the size of

the planters is to be altered and therefore further and coordinated details are necessary.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR