



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2024

By N Perrins MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/D/24/3350352

18 Martins Mead, Felbridge, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 2SX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Alexia Bradshaw against the decision of Mid Sussex District Council.
 - The application Ref is DM/24/1450.
 - The development proposed is the provision of a parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024. The Framework does not raise any new matters that are determinative to the outcome of this appeal.

Main Issue(s)

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an end of terrace dwelling located within a relatively new cul-de-sac housing development known as Martins Mead. To the front of the appeal property is a grassed area that forms part of the landscaping for the Martins Mead development. The character of the area is mainly terraced and linked detached dwellings with associated parking areas and landscaping.
5. The grassed area where the parking space would be located forms a landscaped edge at the end of the cul-de-sac. Landscaping within the development plays an important role within the street scape as it creates a verdant backdrop that serves to soften the relatively large areas of hard surfacing that exist alongside the dwellings. The appeal scheme, and resulting loss of landscaping, would therefore unacceptably change the appearance of the street scene that would detract from the verdant character at the end of the cul-de-sac.
6. I acknowledge that the impact would be very localised to the area around the appeal site and would not be seen by many people. However, it would still be highly visible in its context at the end of the cul-de-sac. It would appear as an incongruous and unduly conspicuous feature in its setting due to its forward and isolated position within the landscaping.

7. The incongruity of the proposal would be accentuated by the proposed construction works, including retaining wall, required to form the parking space within the grassed area that slopes away towards the adjacent boundary fence. The resulting parking space would appear as overly engineered and out of place when viewed with the topography of the remaining grassed area.
8. I have reviewed the appellant's rationale for the proposed development. This includes support from a medical practitioner that advises that parking should be as close to the development as possible due to the specific needs of a family member. However, this advice does not comment, or conclusively demonstrate, that the existing parking arrangements for the property are unworkable in relation to the specific medical circumstances in this case.
9. I also note that a letter of support is provided from a County Council's care practitioner, which also identifies a concern with the location of the existing parking space in relation to the host property. This letter also refers to the property previously having its parking provided directly outside the dwelling but has since been moved by the Housing Association. It is not clear from the information before me why the space was moved and why moving it back has been purportedly rejected and no longer an option.
10. Accordingly, whilst I give the appellant's family medical circumstances moderate weight in this decision, I am not satisfied that it has been conclusively demonstrated that the existing parking for the property is unsuitable in this case, or that it is has been adequately explained why less harmful alternatives cannot be provided. As such, the personal reasons presented do not outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the street scene.
11. In addition, the appellant has referred to some of the neighbouring properties having replaced landscaping with parking without planning permission. However, specific details are not provided to be able to assess whether this is materially relevant. I am, therefore, unable to give any nearby changes to parking arrangements any weight in this decision. Moreover, I can only determine the appeal proposal before me on its own merits and on the information provided, which for the reasons stated does not justify the harm identified.
12. To conclude, I find that the proposal is not in accordance with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan or Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan, which require development and surrounding spaces to be well designed, contribute positively to public and private realms, protects open spaces that contribute to the character of the area, of a layout to respect the character of the site and for parking to be attractively integrated so that it does not dominate the street scape. It would also not be consistent with the guidance set out in the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document that advises that parking should be discreetly incorporated.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all material planning considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Perrins

INSPECTOR