



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/25/3369223

95 Beechwood Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6NF

- 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 Nathan Gardiner against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2025/382.
 - The development proposed is described as *'1. driveway / garage way to be placed at the front of the property. 2. lowered curb in front of property'*
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area; and on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular reference to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling located on the eastern side of Beechwood Road. The dwellings on this side of the road are generally of a similar character and appearance and sit on an embankment above the road, with steep front gardens and steps leading to the front entrances.
4. The proposal is for a garage / office to the front of the dwelling which would be partly constructed within the sloping front garden. The garage would have a width of 4.44m and a depth of 5m and accordingly would take up most of the frontage of the dwelling. A patio, enclosed by railings is proposed above the garage structure.
5. The garage / office building would extend out to the pavement. The 2m high front wall / garage doors, together with the side retaining walls, would dominate the frontage of the site and would be a highly imposing and a prominent feature which would detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling. The proposal would also significantly detract from the character and appearance of the area which is created in part, by the steep front gardens and grassed or landscaped embankments. The railings around the proposed patio would be elevated above the adjacent pavement and would also stand out as being incongruous and out of keeping with the surrounding area.

6. There are examples of garage type structures within the front gardens of dwellings on the eastern side of Beechwood Road, most notably at nos. 27, 31 and 69. However, these garages appear to have been in existence for some time with the Council confirming that the structures at nos. 27 and 69 Beechwood Road were granted planning permission in 1972 and 1965 respectively and that no planning records existing for the structure at no. 31. In any event, these structures have been constructed within less steeply sloping front gardens and are significantly smaller and less prominent than the appeal proposal which, due to its width, depth and height, would dominate the entire frontage of the appeal property.
7. The appellant also refers the frontage of 91 Beechwood Road but from what I could see, the landscaped rockery / flowerbed at no 91 is of a very different appearance to the appeal proposal and maintains the landscaped character of the area. The front extension at 57 Beechwood Road is shallow in depth and does not extend beyond the front wall of the adjoining dwelling and is also materially different to the appeal proposal. I therefore place little weight on these examples.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. Thus, I find that it would be contrary to Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) (CS), Policy DP7 of the Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies (2014) (LP), and Policy CCW5 of the Caterham, Chaldon & Whyteleafe Neighbourhood Plan (2021) (NP). These policies (amongst other things) expect new development to be of a high quality design which integrates well with their surroundings, and which reflects and respects the existing character, setting and local context.

Living conditions

9. Due to the differences in levels, the proposed patio above the garage / office structure would be elevated above street level. Any future use of the patio as a seating or amenity area would be visually imposing on the occupiers of the adjacent dwellings, Nos 93 and 97 Beechwood Road and would be likely to lead to unacceptable levels of overlooking due to its proximity to windows, particularly those on the front elevation of the adjoining semi, 97 Beechwood Road. This would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of those dwellings.
10. Opposite the site is a residential building, Valley Court, which is located on lower ground on the western side of Beechwood Road. Several windows within Valley Court facing towards Beechwood Road appear to serve habitable rooms. Given the proximity and elevated nature of the proposed patio, its use as an amenity area would be likely to result in an unacceptable level of overlooking and consequently, a loss of privacy to occupiers of Valley Court.
11. This leads me to conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular reference to privacy. The proposal would fail to comply with Policy CSP18 of the CS and Policy DP7 of the LP insofar as these policies seek to ensure that development does not significantly harm the amenities and privacy of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has suggested replacing the patio with a green roof or planters; however, this is not the proposal before me. In any event, landscaping would be unlikely to adequately mitigate the harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the area. I also note that the proposal would improve the functionality of the dwelling and opportunities for home working. However, this consideration does not outweigh my concerns set out above.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR