



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2025

By Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/25/3373850

Casa Mia, Bridge Road, Bagshot GU19 5AT

- 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 Mr Paul Johal against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0611/FFU.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as “Repositioned front boundary wall, metal access gate and fencing. Proposed creation of new vehicle access/ dropped kerb to facilitate driveway car parking”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the streetscene and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. Principles 6.8 and 9.1 of the Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), September 2017, are relevant in this case. Taken together, these indicate that on-plot parking should generally be provided to the side or rear but if at the front should be enclosed with soft landscaping and not dominate the plot or streetscene with extensive hard surfacing. Boundary treatment should reflect the character of the development and the surrounding context. In paragraph 9.19 it is indicated that it is important to the Council that new vehicle crossings and areas of hardstanding do not contribute to a deterioration of the streetscene.
4. The appeal concerns a detached dwelling that is one of a group of four that face onto Bridge Road and are set back some distance from the road. Beyond the front of these properties and next to the footway is an amenity strip that comprises grass and some shrubs. Running to either side and behind this area, a road provides access to the dwellings.
5. I saw at my site visit that the presence of soft landscaping in a number of places in the road, as well as the presence of gaps between and in front of buildings, are an important part of the character of the locality. These attributes give a pleasant sense of openness and relief to the built environment, as well as adding visual interest. Although there are larger areas elsewhere, there are smaller spaces too and this beneficial impact includes that to the front of Casa Mia. This is the case

despite the absence of any tall trees, hedges or other vegetation sufficient to screen the group of dwellings from the street. It is suggested that this space is of no value and poorly maintained but it is not unsightly and due to these factors, in its roadside location makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.

6. I saw at my site visit that there are a variety of boundary treatments that include more imposing examples than now proposed, as well as drives and car parking areas. There are also instances where there is limited or no soft landscaping in the vicinity in fairly prominent positions. I have taken account of the submitted photographs concerning such cases. However, a number of these are not comparable to the proposed development, as they concern significantly less deep hard surfaced front gardens with more open frontages than would result in this instance.
7. In any event, I do not have the full background to such cases and examples of unsympathetic development should not be used as a precedent for proposals that would reduce the quality of the environment. Rather than diminishing the significance of sites where there is vegetation and a sense of openness, such as the appeal site, these highlight their importance in preventing an overly developed and harsh appearance.
8. The scheme includes the hard paving of that part of the access to the group of dwellings to the front of Casa Mia, which has already been done. In addition the existing frontage boundary treatment, including gates, railings, a brick wall and piers would be moved forward as far as the amenity strip. To the sides of the additional paved area there would also be 0.85m high brick walls. Dwellings within the group currently have their defined front boundaries at a fairly similar proximity to the street. However, the significantly greater forward projection towards the street of the enclosed front garden at the host dwelling would provide a discordant and jarring contrast with the immediately adjacent dwellings in the group, appearing visually intrusive.
9. A driveway would be built through the middle of the amenity strip. This would appreciably reduce its overall extent and split it into two parts. This drive and the area between it and the existing frontage would entirely comprise hard surfaces. Moreover, the existing enclosed front garden has a particularly extensive paved area. The development would therefore result in an overly large area of hard surfaces, giving a particularly stark and harsh appearance that would be contrary to the SPD. The use of similar paving from the front of the house to the new driveway would tend to further highlight the particularly extensive nature of the hard surfacing.
10. In these circumstances, the overly deep front garden would be an incongruous presence, unduly at odds with the pattern of development in the group. Together with the loss of soft landscaping and the increased sense of enclosure from the boundary treatments, there would be an unacceptable reduction in the quality of the streetscene. In the absence of a specific planting scheme, I am not persuaded that a condition requiring soft landscaping would sufficiently address or mitigate the adverse visual impact to confer acceptability. This is especially so given the forward projection of the enclosed front garden relative to other properties in the group, which would be likely to remain the case regardless of any planting.

11. For these reasons, it is concluded that the streetscene and the character and appearance of the locality would be harmed. These adverse effects would occur despite the site being located in a predominantly residential area within a defined settlement boundary where the principle of development is acceptable.
12. The failure to achieve high quality design that respects and enhances the local environment would result in conflict with Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2028, February 2012, Policy DM9. In the National Planning Policy Framework it is indicated that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include that the proposed development should add to the overall quality of the area, as well as being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, which would not be achieved in this case.
13. The Appellant suggests that the development would enable improvements in relation to matters such as security, crime prevention, vehicle parking and access and enabling private garden use. Nevertheless, there is no detailed evidence to substantiate any significant problems or deficiencies in relation to such matters and to explain how the scheme would address these.
14. It is suggested in the Design and Access Planning Statement submitted with the application that boundary treatments up to a metre in height could be erected under permitted development. However, the brick piers and metal gates and railings at the front would be significantly taller than this. Consequently, I am not persuaded that this potential fallback position would have a comparable impact, let alone a significantly more adverse effect than the current proposal that might justify allowing the appeal in order to seek to prevent a noticeably more harmful development from being built.
15. It is also suggested that the character of the locality could be changed by permitted development rights being exercised at other properties in the vicinity. However, speculation over such possibilities would not be a sound basis for allowing the appeal.
16. In consequence, the above considerations are not afforded any significant weight in favour of the appeal. Taking account of all other matters raised, because of the harm that would arise and conflict with the development plan the appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Evans

INSPECTOR