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Planning Statement

11 Guildford Road, Horsham, RH12 1LU

Proposal:

The development proposed is the erection of a carport to the frontage of the house.

This planning statement accompanies the revised application for 11 Guildford Road, referring to DC/23/1861, originally submitted on October 6, 2023, and refused on January 17, 2024. Following this refusal, an appeal was lodged with the Planning Inspectorate (APP/Z3825/D/24/3339482), which was subsequently declined on April 16, 2024.

In response, we have revised the proposal, addressing the specific concerns raised by the Planning Inspectorate. A significant focus of this revised application is ensuring the full protection of the frontage hedge, which is recognised as a key feature contributing to the verdant character of the local area.

Site Context and Revised Proposal

The property is a detached dwelling situated on the south side of Guildford Road (A281). It is set back from the road behind a prominent frontage hedge that is integral to the character of the street scene and contributes to the verdant appearance of the area.

The revised proposal entails a carefully reconsidered design for a carport at the front of the property, incorporating significant changes to address previous concerns:

- **Flat Roof Design**: The carport roof has been redesigned as flat to minimise visual impact.
- **Lowered Height**: The height of the structure has been reduced to further diminish prominence.
- **Three-Car Carport**: The carport retains its capacity to accommodate three cars, ensuring practical functionality while maintaining a reduced height.
- **Material and Colour**: The timber cladding material has been updated to a grey finish to match the existing main house, ensuring a cohesive and unobtrusive appearance.

Additionally, it should be noted that there are several other carports and garages visible along Guildford Road. This establishes a precedent for this type of development, demonstrating that such structures are in keeping with the character of the area.
Specific examples include:

- **Planning Application DC/19/2553** (Appendix B): Approved for a garage building in the front garden of No. 76 Guildford Road. This garage building is approximately 4.6m in height. The Officer, in their delegated report, writes: “There is a 3m high, mature hedge growing along the front boundary which restricts views from the street scene.” This demonstrates that the Council has recently approved a garage building in the front garden due to the presence of a boundary hedge providing effective screening. Similarly, the position of the proposed garage at 11 Guildford Road, combined with the existing front boundary treatment, ensures that it will not be readily visible from the street.
- **Other Examples**: Front garden garages at No. 80 and No. 52, both of which are screened by boundary vegetation. This highlights the importance of hedging for privacy and security, suggesting that such hedging is likely to remain in perpetuity.

Furthermore, the adjoining boundary with the neighbouring dwelling (No. 12) to the west has well-established boundary hedging, providing sufficient screening and limiting views from the west of the appeal site. Similarly, the neighbouring dwelling (No. 16) to the east also has significant front and side boundary hedging, alongside substantial fencing at 14 Coxham Lane along this boundary. This combination of features again limits views from the east. As such, the replacement shed is largely visible only when directly to the north of the appeal site.

Emphasis on Hedge Protection

The protection and retention of the frontage hedge remain a priority in this revised proposal. Comprehensive measures have been implemented to ensure that the hedge remains unharmed during and after construction. These measures include:

1. **Carport Placement**:
    - The carport has been set back an additional 1000mm from the nearest hedge leaves, creating a safe buffer to prevent any encroachment or damage.
2. **Construction Methodology**:
    - Excavation will be carried out using minimally invasive techniques to protect the root system of the hedge.
    - All site activities will prioritise the health and stability of the hedge, with specific procedures to avoid any direct interference.
3. **Protective Measures During Construction**:
    - Temporary fencing and barriers will be installed around the hedge to protect it from accidental damage caused by construction equipment or materials.
    - Construction site access and material storage will be planned to ensure minimal disturbance to the hedge.
4. **Foundation Design**:
    - A specialised foundation system has been incorporated to avoid impacting the hedge's root system, ensuring its long-term stability and health.
5. **Post-Construction Maintenance**:
    - A maintenance plan will be implemented to ensure the hedge's vitality, including regular pruning, watering, and any necessary remedial actions.
    - This ongoing care will ensure that the hedge continues to thrive and maintain its essential contribution to the character of the street.

By taking these steps, the hedge will remain fully protected, not just during construction but for the foreseeable future. This ensures the verdant character of the area is preserved, addressing the key concerns highlighted by the Planning Inspectorate.

Planning Inspectorate Feedback

The Planning Inspectorate previously noted the importance of the frontage hedge in screening the carport and contributing to the verdant character of the street. While they acknowledged that the hedge could effectively obscure the carport from view, they raised concerns about its protection during and after construction.

This revised proposal directly addresses these concerns, providing detailed assurances and a clear strategy for the hedge's safeguarding and long-term preservation.

Conclusion

The revised proposal is a thoughtful and measured response to the concerns raised by the Planning Inspectorate. With the carport design now featuring a flat roof, reduced height, three-car capacity, and grey cladding to match the main house, the structure harmonises with the property and its surroundings.

Most importantly, the comprehensive measures for protecting and maintaining the frontage hedge ensure that this vital feature will remain undisturbed, preserving the verdant character and appearance of the street scene.

We respectfully request reconsideration of this application, confident that the revised proposal aligns with the objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework, safeguarding the character of the local area while accommodating the proposed development.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please feel free to contact me if further clarification or additional information is required.

Yours sincerely,

Soprat P Samay

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