



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 10 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/16/3164107

56A Abbots Road, Hanham, Bristol, BS15 3NG

- 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 Mr Paul Hawkins against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref PK16/4345/F, dated 23 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2016.
 - The development is described as a wooden garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The copy of the original application form submitted with the appeal documents is undated. The appeal form says that the application was dated 11 July 2016, whilst the Council's decision notice says that the application was made valid on 23 August 2016. I have used the latter date.
3. The garage has been erected and is in use. The appellant, in effect, wishes to retain it. I shall proceed on this basis.
4. Reference is made to policies contained in the emerging South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places (PSP) Plan. However, this plan is yet to be examined, and its policies are therefore subject to possible change. It therefore attracts limited weight in my considerations.

Main issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and street scene.

Reasons

6. The garage, which has been erected in the forecourt to the front of the appeal property, is used for the storage and a workshop for the renovation of classic cars, and for other domestic storage uses. When I visited two cars were parked end to end within; accordingly, the garage is longer than most domestic garages. The remainder of the appeal property's courtyard is used for parking, including vans, and was full when I visited.
 7. I share much of the appellant's description of the character of the locality, which is set out in the following terms:
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The character of the immediate area would be best described as 'mixed', comprising as it does a variety of property types and ages including semi-detached C20th dwellings, bungalows and older buildings of agricultural origin, given the location at the rural fringes of the urban conurbation. Although there is no regular pattern of development, a general sense of openness and high quality low stone boundary walling lend an appealing character to the area.

8. In views from the north, the characteristic openness is very evident, with a wide street and spacious front gardens with low boundary walls predominating along the western frontage of Abbotts Road. A timber fence erected along the common boundary between 54 Abbotts Road and the appeal property disrupts this openness to an extent. The garage is sited the other side of the fence when viewed from the north. Although I agree with the appellant that the fence screens some of the garage, its felted, timber-battened roof is nevertheless clearly apparent above, and to my mind it stands out incongruously.
9. From the south, the appellant claims that the garage is screened by vegetation. Whilst this may be true in summer, my visit took place at a time of the year when defoliation had occurred, a condition that exists for a significant period. The garage was plain to see and appeared as or even more incongruous from this direction.
10. From the front, the garage, which has an utilitarian appearance, is highly noticeable and stands out harmfully in its visual context.
11. I therefore share the Council's view that the erection of the garage has materially altered the character and appearance of the surrounding area, to its detriment. By way of mitigation, the appellant contends that the siting of the appellant's garage is not wholly uncharacteristic. In this regard reference has been made to other sites in the locality where garages have been erected to the front.
12. I do not know the full circumstances of those developments, but most have little to commend them in visual terms. Moreover, I am required to deal with this appeal on its merits, and I find the construction and siting of the garage to have proved unacceptable for the reasons already provided.
13. I conclude that the development has harmed the character and appearance of its surroundings. Accordingly a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policies CS1 of the Council's Core Strategy and saved Policy H4 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan requiring, in combination, the design and siting of development to respect local character.

Other matters

14. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, including the Parish Council's objection and the references to the *National Planning Policy Framework*, but no other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR