

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/16/3161397

Hillyards, Sunset Lane, West Chiltington, Pulborough RH20 2PB

- 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 Mrs Michele Paske against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application, Ref. DC/16/1464, dated 24 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing garage, to be replaced with a detached three bay garage and home office with an external staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the 'street scene' of Sunset Lane.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that Hillyards is on the western side of a generously sized triangular plot in a low-density residential area. Although there is boundary planting, the dwelling and parts of its garden can be seen from a number of vantage points in both Sunset Lane and Monkmead Lane.
 4. The proposed building would replace the existing garage, which is to be demolished, and would be positioned at the eastern end of the existing gravelled driveway and parking area. In its appraisal the Council refers to its House Extensions Design Guidance, which in respect of garages says that '*The scale of the garage should reflect the scale of the house that it serves*'. In its appraisal of the appeal application the officer's report, correctly in my view, interprets this as a requirement for subservience to the dwelling.
 5. However, it could be argued that the height is derived from the functional requirement for headroom in the home office and in this regard the proposed building would therefore be no higher than is necessary. With that said, the garage / store would (according to the Council's calculations) have a height of 5.9m, only 0.2m less than the highest part of the dwelling's roof. As a stand-alone building to some extent read independently of the dwelling, I consider that this would appear incongruous. If the existing dwelling had had a full two storey height then an outbuilding of almost 6m in height would be far more
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likely to appear subservient and thereby more in keeping with its context. However, in this instance the proposed building would appear as disproportionately high.

6. In addition to its excess height the Council has objected to the proposed siting only about 2.5m from the front boundary, which would result in the building's upper half being visible above the boundary screening. Whilst I acknowledge that the growth of vegetation would eventually reduce the prominence of the garage and mitigate its effect on the street scene of Sunset Lane, it is conversely quite possible that the appellant or a future owner of the property could remove or reduce the height of this planting.
7. Bearing this in mind, together with the fact that the Council's Design Guidance advises that '*garages built forward of the main house should not appear unduly prominent in the street scene or detract from the pattern of surrounding development*', I take the view that through a combination of its height and forward siting the building would be an unsympathetic and incongruous development on the site. As such it would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
8. This finding is reinforced because I essentially endorse the observation in the officer's report that although in this locality there are a few examples of garages sited forward of the principal elevation of the dwelling, none are of the scale and size proposed and they also tend to be set further away from the front boundary.
9. Overall, I conclude that the proposed garage and office would have an unacceptably harmful effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and especially the street scene of Sunset Lane. This would be in conflict with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 (Policies 1 & 2 referred to by the Council do not appear to be particularly relevant). There would be a similar conflict with Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
10. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR