
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by David Cliff BA Hons MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/16/3165924

22 Marchwood Avenue, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8UN

- 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 and Mrs Clive and Veronica Leeke against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 161373, dated 20 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is single storey front garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located at the end of Marchwood Avenue. Both it and the neighbouring properties have open frontages which are free of buildings creating an attractive uncluttered appearance in views looking towards the end of this cul-de-sac.
 4. The size and siting of the proposed garage would be such that it would in-fill much of the space adjacent to the northern boundary between the existing front elevation of the dwellinghouse and the pavement edge. The proposed garage in this location would appear as a substantial structure within the streetscene.
 5. Its size and siting forward of the existing dwellinghouse would result in it appearing as visually intrusive and incongruous in views along the road, unacceptably eroding the open character of the frontages of the four properties located at the end of Marchwood Avenue. I go on to consider the matter of the extant planning permission later in this decision.
 6. The proposed eaves level of the garage would align with the eaves level of the dwellinghouse, which also has an existing flat roofed section on the right hand side. Nevertheless, whilst such design features are common to both the existing house and the proposed garage, and the flat roof would be lower than a garage with a pitched roof, I consider that the proposal would still be a
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- substantially sized structure that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appellants draw attention to a planning permission granted in September 2017 by South Oxfordshire District Council for a new detached dwelling adjacent to the northern boundary of the appeal site. The approved dwelling would be substantially forward of the appeal property with a garage that would be located next to that garage currently proposed by this appeal.
 8. The appellant states that within the last few months there have been indications that such approval is being implemented. However, no further details have been provided of what such indications of implementation involve and, from my observations at my site visit, I could not see any works having obviously been commenced.
 9. The construction of this neighbouring scheme would be likely to have a material effect on the existing character and layout of the area in the vicinity of the appeal property at the end of the Marchwood Avenue. Nevertheless, it appears to me from the information provided that it is by no means certain that it would be implemented. I have therefore only given this approved scheme moderate weight. As set out above, based on the existing situation, the proposed garage would result in significant harm to the streetscene. As there are uncertainties as to the whether or not the adjacent scheme will be implemented, I do not consider it to be a factor which outweighs the harm I have identified.
 10. The appellants also refer to several other domestic garages which have been constructed in the surrounding area forward of their host houses, and with flat roofs. In the large majority of cases, such garages do not project as close to the pavement as is the case with the appeal proposal. This includes the existing garages on Tower Close. Where garages or extensions are very close to the pavement, such as the examples cited at Russet Glade and Aldeburgh Close, they are located in a materially different context to the appeal property. I do not therefore consider that such examples provide justification for the appeal proposal which I have considered on its individual merits finding the harm identified above.
 11. I therefore consider that the proposed garage would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to the relevant design aims of policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (amended 2015), policy CS7 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (amended 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
 12. I note that the appellants state that the original garage is no longer fit for purpose due to its narrow width. However, even should this be the case, it does not outweigh my findings above.
 13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cliff

INSPECTOR