
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by David Cliff BA Hons MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3rd April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/W/16/3161445

123 Upper Shirley Avenue, Southampton SO15 5NL

- 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 S Reynolds against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00395/FUL, dated 8 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached double garage with ancillary accommodation above together with a new boundary wall to Upper Shirley Avenue.
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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 site comprises a corner plot at the junction of Upper Shirley Avenue and Wilton Road, within a generally residential area. The existing property's main garden/amenity area is located adjacent to Upper Shirley Avenue.
 4. The proposed garage would be a substantially sized outbuilding, including ancillary accommodation above the garage area. Incorporating a large front gable, its bulk and massing would result in it appearing as a particularly prominent feature in the streetscene and its visual impact would be exacerbated by the addition of two side dormer windows. Although front gables are a typical feature in the streetscene, the massing and height of the gable proposed in this case, resulting from the inclusion of ancillary accommodation above, would be excessively large for a double garage.
 5. The Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2006) seeks to ensure that the size of garages is in proportion and subservient to the size of the house which they serve. Whilst the existing house is large in size, given the massing of the garage, its two storey form and high eaves and ridge line, I do not consider that the proposed garage would appear as being appropriately subservient or proportionate to the existing dwellinghouse. It would also appear as being out of proportion with the adjacent property at 121 Upper Shirley Avenue. The proposal's impact within
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the streetscene would be exacerbated by its prominent siting in line with the front projecting bay and porch of this neighbouring property.

6. Given its excessive height, bulk and massing, I consider that the resulting building would appear as unacceptably dominant and incongruous within the streetscene, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
7. I note that the appellants wish to provide a functional double garage. I see there to be no objection in principle to the construction of a new garage but I consider the design and size of the proposal to be inappropriate in this case. Although it replaces an existing garage and would be located nearer to the south west boundary, its height, scale and massing would result in it appearing as significantly more intrusive within the streetscene.
8. At my site visit I observed existing garages at other properties that have been brought to my attention by the appellants. I note that the garages at 129 and 141 Wilton Road are of a lesser scale and massing than the appeal proposal and the garage at 338 Hill Lane, set well back from the site frontage, is not as prominent within the streetscene. I have therefore given only a modest amount of weight to such other developments. In any case, I have considered the appeal proposal on its individual merits and circumstances, finding harm as identified above.
9. I also observed extensions and other forms of development at existing properties within the area. For the most part the development I saw appears to be in keeping with the overall character of the area and does not provide justification for the appeal proposal.
10. The proposed wall would be located along part of the boundary adjacent to Upper Shirley Avenue, leading up to the edge of the proposed garage. Whilst front boundary treatments along Upper Shirley Avenue are generally low in height, the circumstances in this case are different to most properties as this is a corner plot. A low wall is maintained immediately to the front of the dwellinghouse with the proposed 2m high section of wall sought to provide privacy to the garden area. The wall has been suitably designed with articulation and piers. In the context described above, I do not consider it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. However, despite this finding with respect to the wall, my concerns regarding the harmful appearance of the proposed garage are the overriding consideration.
11. The proposed garage would result in an unacceptably detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to the design aims of policies SDP7 and SDP9 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (2006), policy CS13 of the Southampton City Council Core Strategy (2010) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
12. For the above reasons, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cliff

INSPECTOR