
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 May 2017

by Ken Barton BSc(Hons) DipArch DipArb RIBA FCI Arb

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

Decision date: 25th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/17/3172912

140 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4HF

- 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 B Jenkins against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 163300, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new double garage and conversion of existing garage into cinema room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new double garage and conversion of existing garage into cinema room at 140 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4HF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 163300, dated 24 November 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Nos P708-01-01, 01-02 and 01-03.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The garage hereby permitted shall be kept available at all times for the parking of motor vehicles by the occupants of the dwelling and their visitors and for no other purpose.

Effect on the Character and Appearance of 140 Nash Grove Lane and its Surroundings

2. The appeal property is a substantial, two storey, detached house with an integral double garage that projects forward of the main house. No 142 to the north is a single storey dwelling, whilst Nos 138a and 138 to the south are both two storey and they all have significant projections on their front elevations. The Council characterises the site as edge of settlement/ex woodland and I concur. Nash Grove Lane is a low density, no-through road, with predominantly large dwellings of various designs. The properties stand in relatively large plots, which adds to the spacious appearance of the area.

3. The *Borough Design Guide* seeks to ensure that parking structures are set back from the building line so that dwellings are the dominant feature in the street scene. Whilst the projecting elements of 138 to 142 do form a building line, it is not readily apparent on the ground due in part to the varied designs of the houses and the extent of their front projections. The proposed garage would have a ridge height of around 4 metres and be sited some 5 metres from the boundary with Nash Grove Lane but would be located behind a substantial front boundary wall in front of the existing projecting garage in a corner of the site. There would be significant open space remaining in front of the main house and, in my view, the proposal would have little impact on the overall character and appearance of the house or the surrounding area.
4. Reference has been made to existing detached front garages at 131 and 131a Nash Grove Lane that were built concurrent with the houses and pre date the *Design Guide*. I agree with the Council that these appear bulky and prominent but that is because they occupy what appear to be significantly smaller plots that appear cramped, unlike the appeal site. A significant number of detached garages in the wider area have also been referred to but none of them are on Nash Grove Lane and so do not contribute to the character of the appeal site and its surroundings.
5. I conclude that the proposal would have no material impact on the character and appearance of No 140 and its surroundings. It would, therefore, comply with the objectives of the Core Strategy Policy CP3 and would not undermine the *Design Guide*.

Other Matter

6. I note that, in accordance with guidance, the Appellant attempted to make contact with the Council on a number of occasions before submitting this appeal but that calls were not returned. This is not a matter for my consideration and it has consequently had no effect on my decision in this case.

Conditions

7. The Council has suggested a number of conditions, in addition to the standard time condition, should the appeal be allowed. Firstly, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good planning the approved drawings should be listed. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, a condition should be attached requiring the proposed materials to be similar to those used on the existing dwelling. Finally, to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking in the interest of highway safety, a condition requiring the garages hereby permitted to be kept for parking and no other use should be attached.

K D Barton

Inspector