

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 June 2017

by R J Maile BSc FRICS

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

Decision date: 28 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/17/3171950

1 Pine Rise, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0JA.

- 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 Adam Dabner against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application ref: 20161139, dated 21 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is attached garage and new steel chimney flue above roof on rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue here is the effect of the proposed garage upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. No. 1 Pine Rise comprises a detached 1960's dwelling, which at the time of my site visit was being extended pursuant to planning permission granted last year (ref: 20160744). It forms part of a small cul-de-sac development of similar properties. The dwelling is located at the junction of Pine Rise and Wrotham Road (A227) and is within the Hook Green Conservation Area. The pre-existing integral garage to the property is currently being converted to residential use.
 4. The scheme before me proposes the erection of an attached single garage that would be constructed in matching materials, with a pitched and tiled roof. The garage would be located between the north gable end of no. 1 and the back edge of the footpath of Pine Rise. A gap of 1m would be retained between the flank wall of the new structure and the pavement in order to preserve the existing mixed species hedge.
 5. Given its location within a Conservation Area, I have considered the proposal by reference to the statutory duty imposed upon me by virtue of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
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6. I have also had regard to national policy as set out at Chapter 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the Framework¹ and to the relevant policies of the Development Plan, in this case Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy² and "saved" Policy TC3 of the Local Plan³. Policy CS20 states, amongst other matters, that the Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource.
7. The Hook Green Conservation Area represents an important heritage asset. As such, paragraph 132 of the Framework requires me to give great weight to its conservation.
8. The garage would be located in front of the established building line along Pine Rise, such that it would appear unduly prominent in the street scene. Although screened by the mature pine trees on the main road frontage the new structure would be highly visible from the northern extremity of the Green itself, which forms the core of the designated Conservation Area. For this reason, development as proposed would be at odds with and damaging to the established character of the Green, where the dwellings have retained a generally spacious setting.
9. The two storey flank elevation of the property on the opposite side of Pine Rise (Green View) is relatively close to the back edge of pavement. However, it pre-dates designation of the Conservation Area and is set far enough away from the pavement to create a satisfactory relationship with the dwellings in Pine Rise. Conversely, the tall gable end of the proposed garage would closely abut the pavement and, as such, would represent an overbearing feature as viewed from the Conservation Area.
10. My attention has been directed to the detached garage erected at Homefield, Wrotham Road, to the south of the appeal site.
11. I am not aware of the planning history attaching to that garage and whether it replaced an earlier structure. However, although visible from the Conservation Area it is set back from its front boundary and is seen against the backdrop of the main dwelling and the rear elevation of 1 Pine Rise. By contrast the garage the subject of this appeal would be tight against the back edge of pavement of Pine Rise, thereby rendering it more visible in the street scene.
12. I also have concerns as to the adequacy of the 1m gap between the flank wall of the garage and the back edge of pavement to allow for the long-term health of the mature boundary hedge, which makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Those concerns are shared by the Council's Conservation Architect.
13. I see no objection in principle to the erection of the proposed new chimney flue to the west elevation. Here again, however, I agree with the Conservation Architect that this should be black in colour and not a stainless steel finish, as specified.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework.

² The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy: adopted September 2014.

³ The Gravesham Local Plan First Review: adopted November 1994.

14. For all of these reasons I have found upon the main issue that the siting of the garage in front of the established building line in Pine Rise and its visual impact as viewed along the street frontage from Hook Green would be harmful to the established character and appearance of the surrounding area and that of the Hook Green Conservation Area.
15. Although the harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial, development as proposed would nevertheless have a detrimental impact upon this important heritage asset contrary to national policy at Chapter 12 of the Framework, Policy CS20 of the adopted Core Strategy and "saved" Policy TC3 of the Local Plan.
16. The harm to the heritage asset which I have described is not outweighed by the benefit to the appellant of providing a single garage to serve the extended dwelling, which will retain on-site parking facilities.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR