

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X1165/D/17/3169637

12 Barnfield Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 6TN

- 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 Martin Bloomfield against the decision of Torbay Council.
 - The application Ref P/2016/0472/HA, dated 13 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2016.
 - On the application form, the development proposed is described as "to create a double garage with home office in roof space. Erection of shed in south west corner of garden".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed double garage. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the erection of shed in the south west corner of the garden at 12 Barnfield Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 6TN in accordance with the terms of application, Ref P/2016/0472/HA, dated 13 April 2016 and the plans submitted with it, insofar as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted.

Procedural matters

2. No one was present when I conducted my site inspection. However I was able to gain a good view of the site from the public highway and as such I was able to fully assess the appeal.
3. Amended plans were submitted which has resulted in the removal of the home office in the roof space. The Council based its decision on the amended scheme and I have done likewise. Consequently there are implications for the description of the development, with the need to remove the reference to the office in the roof space. This is reflected in my formal decision. The shed in the south west corner of the garden has been constructed; therefore I am considering this element of the appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the double garage on the character and appearance of the area.

The double garage

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located in a part of Barnfield Road which is characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings generally set within large plots. While each dwelling is individual, there is a common design to many, with the pitched roofs and gables being a significant characteristic of the dwellings. Typically
-

there are single garages and these appear as modest structures. The character of the dwellings and the generally modest appearance of the garages contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

6. The appeal property is a detached dwelling with roof forms, gable features, and a single garage that is typical of the surrounding houses. There is a small section of crown roof between the existing pair of single storey side gables. Due to its modest size it is an inconspicuous feature.
7. The site sits on the outside bend of the road. To the west the road rises up and from this vantage point the appeal dwelling, particularly the side elevation and side garden, are prominent. The existing single garage is set a good way back from the frontage of the property and contains a pitched roof. Its position is such that it is not prominent and its roof design is in keeping with the character of the host dwelling and surrounding properties.
8. The development would introduce a side extension that would be significantly wider than the existing single garage. It would step forward from the main part of the front elevation and significantly forward of the existing garage. It would incorporate a crown roof with a large area of flat roof behind a small section of pitched roof. Taken together the width of the extension, its step forward from the main building line, and the large area of crown roof, would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. This harm would be exacerbated due to the sites' prominent location where the scale of the extension and roof form would be dominant in views as the site is approached from the higher ground to the west.
9. Although the roof height would be similar to the ridge of the garage, the overall scale of the extension is much more significant. The small sections of tiles on the roof would have a similar pitch to some of the existing roof slopes including the existing modest crown roof feature. However the scale of the proposed crown roof form would still appear harmfully uncharacteristic compared to the roof forms found on the host property and the buildings in the nearby area. The height and roof pitch would not therefore minimise the harm that would arise.
10. The garage would sit behind the building line of the porch, but this would not reduce the harm that would arise. There is mature hedging at the property which results in some screening, and when approaching from the east, heading up hill, the garage would not be prominent in views until reaching the driveway. This does not however minimise the harm that would arise especially in the prominent views from the west, where the hedge and other planting does not provide significant screening. Some design features and similar materials that are present on the existing house have been incorporated into the design, and, in percentage terms, there would only be a modest increase in the foot print of development on the site. These factors would not minimise the harm that would arise from the scale of the development when seen in the context of its positioning and roof form.
11. There is a double garage in the garden of the property opposite. That building sits at a lower level than the house. The position of the plot, and the garage within the plot, is such that it is much less prominent than the appeal garage would appear. Its existence does not therefore justify the appeal scheme.

12. Planning permission has been granted for an extension to 1 Barnfield Road. This incorporates a gable extension which would project forward of the existing front wall of the dwelling. The design of No 1 is substantially different to No 12 and its immediate neighbours and the extension is also not comparable to the appeal extension. While the forward projection of the proposed garage is a contributory factor to the harm, this is together with the scale, position, and design, particularly in terms of the roof form. Thus while the Council has granted permission at No 1, that development is not similar to the appeal development and it does not justify it.
13. Several other developments at surrounding properties have been drawn to my attention in Mead Road and Round Hill Road. There are examples of garages and other extensions that have been brought forward of the main front building line. However the step forward is not the only factor that would lead to harm from the appeal garage. The context, design, and positioning of these other properties varies very considerably to No 12. They do not justify the proposed scheme nor would they minimise the harm that would arise from it.
14. I therefore conclude that the double garage would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies DE1 and DE5 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012 to 2030 (the LP). These policies seek to ensure development acknowledges local character and that extensions do not dominate or have adverse effects on the character or appearance of the original property, or the street scene.

Other matters

15. The existing garage limits the light levels to the kitchen and blocks views of an important and well used part of the garden. The scheme would result in improved light and views. I acknowledge that this would be a benefit to the appellant; however I am not convinced that the appeal scheme is the only means to seek to improve the light levels and the view. I therefore give these factors limited weight. The scheme would increase the off-street parking available and could reduce the need for on-street parking. This would be a benefit for the appellant, however I saw nothing to suggest that on-street parking created a particular hazard, indeed this often contributes to lowering traffic speeds. I therefore give this factor very limited weight. The garage would also increase the barrier to the rear of the property; however I have no evidence that the existing situation causes any particular security issues. Therefore I also give this factor only very limited weight.
16. The extension would largely be constructed over existing areas of hardstanding and the footprint of the single garage. This could aid with limiting any additional impacts on drainage. I also note that the immediately adjoining neighbours have not raised any objections. These are neutral factors and do little to weigh in favour of the development.
17. While I acknowledge the efforts made by the appellant to overcome the initial concerns raised by the Council and local residents, I cannot give this any significant weight and I must reach my conclusion on the current scheme.

Conclusion on the main issue

18. The benefits that would arise in terms of the improved light to the kitchen, views to the side garden, improved on-site parking, and security to the rear of

the site do not outweigh the significant harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the area. The adverse effects of the double garage are sufficient to mean that it would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. I conclude on this main issue that planning permission should not be granted for the double garage.

The shed

19. The shed is of a modest height and foot print; it is located in the rear corner of the garden and bounded by hedges where it is close to the neighbouring properties. Its scale and location is such that it is in keeping with other outbuildings in the locality. No harm has resulted to the character and appearance of the area. The modest scale of the development is also such that no harm has arisen to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The shed therefore complies with Policies DE1, DE3, and DE5 of the LP which seek to ensure development acknowledges local character and that there is no undue impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents.
20. Given the shed is separate from the proposed garage I am able to issue a split decision and grant planning permission for it. As the development has been constructed no conditions are necessary. Although this element of the development is acceptable it does not mitigate the harm that would arise from the double garage.

Overall conclusion

21. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the shed and dismissed insofar as it relates to the double garage.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR