

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/17/3175438

Sandys, Pollards Moor Road, Copythorne, Southampton SO40 2NZ

- 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 & Mrs J Torrance against the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority ('the NPA').
 - The application, Ref. 17/00132, dated 14 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed garage on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the adjacent Forest North East Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that this section of Pollards Moor Road has a particularly pleasing rural character as a result of the hedgerows and trees on both sides of the road contributing to an appearance as a country lane. On the north east side there is a linear development of houses and bungalows, including Sandys, but these are sufficiently set back from the road for most of the front gardens to make an additional positive contribution to the rural character.
 4. Whilst the gravel and hard surfaced driveways are for the most part subservient to the rural appearance of the road, I agree with the view of the NPA that the introduction of buildings and structures within the front gardens would be harmful to that appearance. With a position close to the front boundary the proposed garage would be intrusive in the 'street scene', and incongruous because the existing garages and outbuildings in the locality are all to the side and rear of the properties.
 5. I have noted that the proposal was amended to lower the proposed garage by digging into the ground, and it is argued that together with letting the front hedge grow higher this would assist in preventing the structure from being easily seen. In addition, I acknowledge that the design and external materials would be sympathetic to the countryside location.
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6. However, as the NPA has pointed out, the permanent retention of the front hedge cannot be guaranteed and given that the entrance to the driveway permits views into the front garden I also consider it unlikely that the visual impact of the building would be adequately offset. Furthermore, the principle is important in this case because as the first development of its type in this part of the road, if I were to allow the appeal it would be difficult for the NPA to resist similar proposals with their harmful cumulative effect.
7. Finally, the proximity of the boundary of the conservation area is such that any changes in the appearance of the street scene of this part of Pollards Moor Road must have an adverse effect on its setting, and again this factor has as much to do with the principle of this form of development as the visual impact of this particular building.
8. Overall I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. This would be in harmful conflict with Policies DP1, DP6, CP7, CP8 & DP12 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2010 and Government policy in Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
9. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR