

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/17/3175481

10 Cheveley Gardens, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, SL1 8AX

- 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 Gurvinder Lally against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref. 16/02084/FUL, dated 3 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is garage loft conversion with new raised roof & side dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached house located near the entrance to a cul-de-sac of detached houses, set back from the roadside behind open front gardens which give a sense of spaciousness to the development. Garaging is generally positioned to the side of the dwellings, but in contrast the garage to the appeal property is prominently located forward of the house and close to the footway. Greenswards at the entrance to Cheveley Gardens contribute to the sense of space, but due to the size and siting of the existing garage it is a reasonably prominent feature in the street scene and in views from Dropmore Road.
 4. The garage at the appeal site is close to the main dwelling and the two are linked via a conservatory. Due to this proximity, when viewed from the public domain the proposed increase in the height of the garage building and the large dormer window would result in an overly large and bulky addition that would not harmonise with the main house. Its size and scale would appear disproportionate in this context.
 5. The extended garage would be an unduly dominant and incongruous feature in the street scene, particularly given its prominent siting near the entrance to the road. Although there is some planting to filter views of the development from the road, this would not provide year-round screening, and I do not share the
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appellant's view that the proposal would not be visible from Dropmore Road. As the proposed dormer window would occupy much of the southern roof slope, it would be excessive in size and scale on the building, and would be visually intrusive when glimpsed from outside of the site. This would conflict with the aims of Policy H11 of the South Bucks District Local Plan 1999 (LP), which requires extensions to dwellings to harmonise with the existing building in terms of scale, height, form, and design, and to have no adverse impact on the character or amenities of the locality in general.

6. I note the appellant's view that the proposal would involve an increase in ridge height of the garage of 1.25 metres, but given its position on the site and in the street scene, this would be a significant increase. Moreover, in addition to the change in height, the proposal includes a large dormer window that would add to the bulk of the building. Whilst I accept that no objections to the proposal were received from any neighbouring resident or the Council's Tree Officer, this alone is not a determining factor in assessing the impact of a development.
7. Reference is made by the Council and the appellant to other garages sited forward of dwellings in Dropmore Road but none have been specifically identified. However, it is not evident that any in the locality are of comparable siting, scale and design to the appeal proposal, and as such I do not consider that these examples justify approval of this development.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property and the locality, contrary to the overarching design aims of Policy CS8¹, and with LP Policies H11 and EP3, which requires development to be compatible with the character and amenities of the site itself and locality in matters including scale, siting, height and design. It would also conflict with general guidance in respect of building design set out in the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2008, and with the analysis in the Townscape Character Study. I have found no conflict with LP Policy H13, as this appears to relate to the construction of new buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, but this does not alter my conclusions.

Conclusion

9. The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, but for the reasons given above the proposal would not comply with this principle and would not be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

¹ Of the South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document February 2011