

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/17/3178347

163A Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead RG40 4HY

- 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 Stephen Grenfell against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 170900, dated 12 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 15 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is to erect a 2 bay wooden garage (Cart House) in our front drive.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Reasons

3. The proposed development includes the erection of a timber garage within the front garden of a detached dwelling situated within a predominantly residential area. The surrounding properties are set back from the road, sited within extensive curtilages and have landscaped front gardens which are also used for parking. Accordingly, the character and appearance of the streetscene is verdant and spacious.
 4. *The Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* identifies that garages should not be sited in front gardens but should be to the side or rear of a dwelling. Further, garages should not project forward of the building line of a property. However, as has been identified by the appellant and observed during the site visit, there are some dwellings fronting Nine Mile Ride which have outbuildings within their front gardens, including at Nos. 161a, 162, 174, 175 and 178. The planning history of these other outbuildings has not been provided so it is unclear whether they were schemes assessed against the design guidance in the SPD.
 5. Based upon the site visit, the established verdant and spacious character and appearance of the streetscene along Nine Mile Ride between its junctions with
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Finchampstead Road and Warren Lane is not materially disrupted by the limited number of existing outbuildings within the front gardens. These outbuildings are not particularly noticeable from the road because they are either well screened by mature frontage vegetation or set back from the front boundary thereby visually relating more to the host dwelling and retaining an open frontage to the streetscene.

6. The design and choice of external materials for the appeal scheme would be appropriate within the context of this verdant area. However, the proposed garage would be sited within the front garden well forward of the host property and this would be contrary to the design guidance contained in the SPD. Further, by reason of height and siting, parts of its walls and roof would be visible from the road above the existing boundary vegetation, especially when viewed from the west.
7. Although there are other outbuildings along this part of the road, for the reasons which have been given they are not as visually dominant within the streetscene as the appeal scheme would be. Accordingly, I share the Council's assessment that the siting of the proposed garage would result in an uncharacteristic form of development which would fail to reflect the predominant pattern of development and would not be compatible with the verdant and spacious character and appearance of the streetscene.
8. Although the existing boundary vegetation could be allowed to mature or new planting introduced to provide a more effective visual screen this would take some years to achieve. Such planting should not be used to hide what might otherwise be an unacceptable proposal which is at odds with the general pattern of development. For this reason, there would be a conflict with Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Document (MDD) to the extent that there is limited scope to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on this identified Green Route.
9. By reason of siting, it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene and, as such, there would be a conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (CS), MDD Policy CC03 and the SPD. Amongst other matters CS Policy CP3 requires proposals to be of high quality design that is appropriate to the character of the area. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's core principle of securing high quality design.
10. The appellant has indicated a willingness to amend the proposed development but I am required to determine this appeal based upon the scheme before me to assess. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR