



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2019

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/19/3228655

22 Gleaners Close, Weavering ME14 5ST

- 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 Tim Robinson against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/506119/FULL, dated 23 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as "Construction of an 8m x 6m double garage with pitched roof to be built using brick and tile to match the house on the same plot. It will sit between an existing fence on one side and existing tall hedging on the other side and rear. The existing house is part brick and part clad in timber and grey Cedral board and we propose to have the garage finishes to match".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The part of the planning application form where the proposal is described includes matters concerning fees and the submitted drawings that do not comprise an act of development. I have therefore omitted these parts from the above description.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the locality and streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a detached dwelling reached by a drive off one side of the end of Gleaners Close. Between the turning head at the end and the street in Grovewood Drive South is a reasonably extensive strip of land. This area provides a significant gap in the built environment due to the absence of buildings. As a result, there is a pleasant sense of openness and visual relief in an otherwise fairly densely developed area.
5. Rather than being set to the side of the carriageway, as other buildings in the street tend to be, the new detached outbuilding would be located at the end of the cul de sac and towards the middle of this space. It would also be at an

- appreciable distance from the associated dwelling. It would be a relatively large structure with a height of 5.1m and a footprint of 6.6m by 8.6m. Other garages in the street tend to be of an appreciably lesser scale than this and noticeably closer to the associated dwelling.
6. The garage would be of a lesser and subordinate scale by comparison to the host dwelling. The pitch of the roof and the facing materials would match those in the existing house. Nevertheless, in the above circumstances the garage would be an incongruous and relatively isolated feature, unacceptably at odds with the pattern of development in Gleaners Close while also unduly eroding the gap between buildings.
 7. The Appellant suggests that with existing vegetation retained and new planting which could be secured by a condition, the garage would blend into the streetscene. However, there is no detailed evidence to demonstrate that there would be sufficient space between the garage and the existing tree and hedge next to the turning head to enable construction and to avoid unduly compromising their longevity through root damage, or to allow new planting.
 8. New planting would also be likely to take significant time to have any meaningful effect in relation to such a fairly large building, even if it could be carried out. It also seems to me that the garage would be likely to be a longer lasting and more permanent feature of the locality anyway. Moreover, any suggestion that acceptability should be conferred on the basis of restricted visibility represents an implicit acknowledgement of the inappropriate nature of the development.
 9. The presence of the garage would be apparent in filtered views through the existing vegetation and above the hedge when looking from Gleaners Close. It would be obtrusive in views from Grovewood Drive South and Provender Way, rising to a significant degree above the fence along this boundary. In consequence, the detrimental presence of the garage would be apparent from these locations. I am not therefore persuaded that new and existing planting would justify allowing the appeal.
 10. It is acknowledged that the site and locality are not subject to any particular designation, such as a Conservation Area or Listed Building. Nevertheless, for the above reasons it is concluded that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the locality and streetscene.
 11. As a result of the above factors, there would be conflict with Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 Policies DM 1 and DM 9, which among other things seek to ensure that new development achieves a high quality of design, responds positively to local character and the scale and siting of the proposal fits unobtrusively with the context.
 12. The context of the proposed building is not comparable to that shown in figure 4.15 of the Council's Residential Extensions, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2009. However, the adverse impact on the space comprising a gap in development and the streetscene by virtue of the location of the garage would, nevertheless, be contrary to the advice contained in the SPD. In addition, because it would be physically divorced from the host dwelling, it would not be subservient in its position, therefore also conflicting with the SPD in this regard.

13. The development would be contrary to Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This indicates that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character, which would not be achieved in this instance.
14. The Appellant points out that the Council has previously granted planning permission for a shed in a similar position. However, this has not been erected and I have not been provided with any drawings. In any case, it is clear from the Council's report that this would have been a considerably smaller and lower structure than that now proposed. It is argued that the garage would reduce the potential for clutter by enabling cars to be parked within it rather than in the open. Nevertheless, any parked cars would tend to be present on an intermittent basis and also be noticeably lower than the proposed garage. I do not therefore consider that the above matters should be afforded any significant weight in favour of the appeal.
15. In this instance the space for car parking and storage within the garage would be achieved at the unacceptable expense of the quality of the environment. I note that the Appellant has invested in the site and property, including removing a leylandii hedge. However, neither this, nor any other matter raised, is sufficient to justify accepting the development given the harm that would result and it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR