



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 October 2019

by Mr Kim Bennett DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/19/3231271

30 Holtye Crescent, Maidstone ME15 7DB

- 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 Wright against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/500635/FULL, dated 5 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 April 2019.
 - The development is a bicycle storage facility for 4 bicycles.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached house located on the southern side of Holtye Crescent. It has a single storey extension on its eastern side extending up to the common boundary with No 32 Holtye Crescent, and the front garden is largely hard surfaced to accommodate parking. The character of the road is of similar semi-detached houses with largely open front gardens bounded by low walls or hedges.
4. The development is already in place and comprises a green painted shed located on the western side of the front garden and measuring a maximum 1.67 metres high x 2.1 metres wide x 1.48 metres deep. Its primary purpose is to accommodate the family bicycles.
5. The appellants point out that the facility is needed because there is no side access to the property and suggest that its impact is limited because it is not much bigger than a bin enclosure or indeed a parked car. I do not consider that either analogies are directly comparable given that both are moveable and may or may not be present on the frontage in any case, depending upon an occupier's preference for storage or need for parking. That is not the case with a permanent structure which is in view all the time.
6. Whilst the shed is screened somewhat when approaching from the west, because of neighbouring trees, it is in full view when approaching the site from

the east along Holtys Crescent, and from directly opposite. As such it is very apparent from nearby houses, from passing vehicles and from pedestrians using footpaths on either side of the road. In that regard, and because of its size and bulk, I consider that the shed is incongruous in its front garden setting and relates poorly to both the host building and the street scene in general. As such it causes visual harm. Given the prominence of the structure I also do not consider that such harm could be adequately mitigated over time by the addition of landscaping.

7. I am sympathetic to the inconvenience of having no side access to the property, necessitating bicycles having to be brought through the house itself. However, I assume the appellants were aware of such a constraint at the time of purchasing the property. I also acknowledge the role of cycling in assisting to reduce carbon emissions, which the appellants are clearly in support of. However, that has to be balanced against other issues and in this instance, I attach greater weight to the visual harm that has resulted in a front garden setting where one would not expect to see such a structure. In that context, I walked up and down the Crescent and noted no other similar structures in front gardens. I also noted that other properties had been extended up to the side boundaries so as to prevent side access and I can appreciate the Council's concern that approval of this scheme could be used in support of similar proposals along the Crescent. Whilst each application has to be considered on its merits, I consider that because of similar site conditions elsewhere, it is not a generalised fear of precedent, but a realistic and specific concern. The cumulative effect of several such structures would compound the harm to the street scene setting which I have found above.
8. Finally, whilst the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Extensions has been approved for some time, in my view it is based on sound design guidance and design principles which have not changed. In any event, I also find that the proposal is contrary to Policies DM1 and DM9 of the Council's Local Plan 2017, in that it is not a high quality design, does not respond positively to local character and does not fit unobtrusively with the host building or the character of the street scene.
9. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR