
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2019

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/19/3234823

1 Memorial Road, Hook RG27 9LL

- 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 Albert Johnson against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00911/HOU, dated 17 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two bay car port.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of the development from the formal decision notice and the appeal form as these more clearly describe the proposal than the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. 1 Memorial Road is a chalet bungalow property sited perpendicular to London Road. It presents a gable end to the A30 and is set back by several metres and behind a mature and high hedge. The proposed car port would be sited on a separate parcel of land to the host building, on the opposite side of the entrance to Memorial Road. This parcel of land also has a hedge on the London Road frontage. To the south west is a timber boundary fence, beyond which is 1 The Gables, a large semi-detached red brick dwelling with hard standing to the front.
5. The wider context of London Road is characterised by a variety of residential development in terms of age, form and siting. Opposite the appeal site is open land which includes a war memorial. Whilst there is no consistent building line along the south side of London Road, housing is set back. The resultant space, combined with the land opposite, provides a strong sense of openness and helps to define this as a main arterial route.
6. The proposed development would be sited within close proximity of the carriageway edge and the whole footprint would be forwardmost of the buildings either side of it. Whilst the single-storey height, lower levels compared to London Road, and existing landscaping would help mitigate its

impact to a degree, I consider that the proposed development due to its siting would still appear prominent within the street scene. It would be clearly visible on approaches in both directions along London Road and from the junction on the opposite side of this. The existing landscaping to the frontage is thin and the fencing to the side is low and as such they offer limited mitigation. Moreover, any landscaping should not be used to mitigate development that is otherwise inappropriate. Due to the siting of the proposed car port it would erode the openness at this point and appear incongruous forward of the existing built form immediately to the south west and north east.

7. Furthermore, whilst I note the proximity of the site to the countryside and that the mix of housing includes dwellings that may be associated with a rural context, I do not consider this to be a semi-rural location. The prevalence of Edwardian and Victorian properties of red brick and later twentieth century housing, including the dwellings on Memorial Road, generates an urban or suburban character. Taken in isolation from its siting and context I do not find the form of the proposal objectionable. However, the form of the proposed car port in such a prominent position, forwardmost of 1 The Gables and 1 Memorial Road, contributes to it appearing out of keeping.
8. Finally, I note that the site is currently open and without any built form upon it. The appellant highlights that a garage has occupied the site previously and suggested that due to the siting of that structure it was detrimental to the living conditions of 1 The Gables, and to the access and egress of the site. I have noted the photographic evidence of the structure, but I do not have full details of it and moreover, it has been removed. As such I afford this matter limited weight.
9. In conclusion on the main issue, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to saved policies GEN1 and GEN4 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 dated April 2009. These policies, amongst other aims, seek to protect local character and sustain or improve the urban design of settlements.
10. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR