
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/19/3235004

11 Basingbourne Road, Fleet GU52 6TE

- 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 Mrs Carol Prime against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01307/HOU, dated 10 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is detached garage with office space above.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) states that the weight given to relevant policies in emerging plans should be according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the plan with the Framework.
3. The emerging Hart Local Plan - Strategy and Sites 2016-2032 (emerging plan) is referred to in the decision notice. I am not aware of any unresolved objections or the exact stage the plan has reached. Consequently, it carries limited weight in my decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The variation in the scale and design of the properties on Basingbourne Road creates an element of individuality. Nonetheless, while some properties are located close to their side boundaries with the road, there is a relatively consistent front building line with properties being set back from the road behind gardens and parking areas.
6. The appeal scheme would introduce a large building with accommodation over 2 floors forward of the existing building line. This would be incongruous with the existing streetscene where the general absence of buildings forward of the properties creates an open feel to the street. The position and scale of the building would erode this openness.

7. The trees at the site would be retained. These and the other frequent mature landscaping to the front of the properties, including within the front garden of 9 Basingbourne Road, would partly screen the garage. This would particularly be the case from the front and the approach from Reading Road South. However, there would still be glimpsed views through and above the landscaping. In addition, the garage would be more clearly visible when approaching the site from the other direction and its discordance with the existing built form would be obvious.
8. My attention has been drawn to other sites and developments in the area. Several of these relate to dwellings or flats rather than outbuildings. Furthermore, they would not be viewed with the appeal scheme. Therefore, they are not directly comparable to the scheme before me.
9. I saw that due to its scale and location the garage of comparable size and position on Reading Road South was particularly conspicuous in the streetscene. I do not know the full circumstances or policies that applied at the time of that scheme being considered. Furthermore, there would be limited views of that existing garage and the appeal proposal together given the intervening built form, landscaping and changes in land levels. In any case, such buildings are very much in the minority and I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
10. The proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies GEN1, GEN4 and URB16 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006, as well as Policy NBE10 of the emerging plan. It would also fail to accord with the Framework. These, in part require developments to be sympathetic to local character including in regard to layout, scale and street patterns and to not harm the streetscene.

Other Matters

11. There are no refusal reasons relating to the effect of the proposal on parking or the living conditions of nearby residents. As I am dismissing the appeal there is no need for me to consider these matters further and the absence of harm is a neutral factor.
12. I appreciate that the appellant wishes to provide cover for their vehicles and that the scheme would aid in their current restoration project. Nonetheless, this personal benefit is not a justification for setting aside the harm that the proposal would cause.
13. The removal of the toilet from the scheme and the imposition of a condition restricting the use of the building to ancillary purposes have been suggested. Nevertheless, this would not overcome the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

14. For the reason given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR