



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2019

by Tobias Gethin BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3239177

54 Ellis Road, Crowthorne RG45 6PT

- 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 Stichbury against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 192024, dated 26 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is proposed garage to front elevation and conversion of existing garage into a habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site contains a detached dwelling set-back from Ellis Road and behind a relatively large laurel hedge. Properties in the locality of the site generally have a similar or greater set-back from the highway, particularly on the same side of Ellis Road as the site. There are also numerous mature trees and hedges fronting the highway. The surrounding area therefore has a spacious character and verdant appearance, and the set-back building line forms a positive characteristic of the area which is not notably disrupted by outbuildings or other such structures.
4. The proposed detached garage would be situated towards the front of the site, well forward of the building line established by the similar set-backs of 50-54 Ellis Road. Although the garage would be located behind the hedge, the roof would protrude above it. I observed on my site visit that the garage itself would also be visible through the driveways serving the site and No 52. The garage would therefore be clearly visible from the public realm, and its presence would be emphasised by its frontage location and the greater set-back of the nearby properties to the west.
5. Consequently, while the conversion of the existing attached garage to a habitable room is unobjectionable, the proposed detached garage would appear as an incongruous, intrusive and relatively dominant feature which would erode the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In coming to this conclusion, I have taken account of the variety of built form in the locality, the

proposed external materials matching the host dwelling, the various previously-approved planning applications at the site, and how the proposed garage would relate to and disrupt the set-back context of the dwelling.

6. My attention has been drawn to the garages at the front of 68 and 74 Ellis Road. However, No 68 is set-back to a greater extent than adjoining properties and significantly more than the dwelling on the appeal site, and No 74 is some distance away, forms a corner plot and includes a frontage on Hillary Drive which I observed on my site visit has a different character and appearance to Ellis Road. These examples are therefore not particularly comparable to the proposed development and I also do not know how those garages came about. Accordingly, I have determined the appeal proposal on its own merits.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. I therefore find that it conflicts with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2010 and Policies CC01 and CC02 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014. Amongst other aspects, these: set out that development that accords with the development plan will be approved; and require development to take account of the character of the area, maintain the high quality of the environment and contribute to a sense of place in the way they integrate with their surroundings. The appeal proposal would also be inconsistent with the guidance in the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012, including in relation to development blending in with existing character and that garages should not project forward of the building line of a property.

Other matters

8. The Council did not raise concerns regarding the effect of the development on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers and I recognise that neighbours have not objected. The Local Highway Authority also raised no objection and access visibility and manoeuvring would not be harmed by the proposed development. Be that as it may, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified nor provide justification for development that conflicts with the development plan.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Tobias Gethin

INSPECTOR