
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2020

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/D/19/3241224

Abshot Cottage, Hook Lane, Warsash, Southampton SO31 9HH

- 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 and Mrs Alistair Austin against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/19/0659/FP, dated 20 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of detached oak framed 2 bay open fronted garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposed detached garage would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hook Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located within the Hook Conservation Area (HCA), and due to its location within this heritage designation, I have attached considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (CA) in accordance with section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
4. Abshot Cottage comprises a detached dwelling set back and elevated above Hook Lane. In this part of the HCA, dwellings which include the appeal property, Paynters, Malvern, Oak Tree Cottage and Acorn Cottage, are set back from the highway and partially concealed by mature hedgerows and tall trees that abut the lane. The intervening land between these dwellings and the lane is undeveloped and largely consists of parking and garden space. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy for Hook states that the trees and hedges in this part of the lane are essential to its informal rural feel and are an important element in the character of the CA. I do not disagree with this assessment and consider that the verdant character of the lane and natural boundary enclosures contribute to the significance of the HCA. This contrasts to the open setting further to the south, where the more historic buildings are sited close to the road, but in less verdant surroundings.

5. The proposed detached garage would be sited on the existing driveway and parking area in front of the house and close to the appeal property's front boundary with Hook Lane. An outbuilding in this part of the lane forward of the dwelling and close to and rising above the laurel hedge enclosing the site would appear as an intrusive anomaly. Moreover, the building's height, roof mass and siting would have a discordant impact that would unsettle the natural rural qualities that characterise this part of Hook Lane.
6. The Fareham Borough Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document, adopted December 2015 (the SPD) provides guidance on the siting of garages and other buildings in front gardens and states they will normally be allowed in streets where others are found.
7. In support of the appeal, my attention has been drawn to other properties in the area that have outbuildings either forward of the building or in prominent positions. However, I do not know the full circumstances of those cases or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. In any event, those that I saw, including outbuildings and garages at Nos 1 and 2 Hook Cottages, The Old Forge and The Gardens were in a part of the HCA where the character of the settlement was more open with dwellings located closer to the road. The appeal property is located in a part of the hamlet where there is more vegetation concealing the dwellings and properties are in a setback position from Hook Lane. There are no examples of garages or outbuildings forward of the building line here. Whereas the example of the garage at Acorn Cottage was well set back from the lane and does not, in my view harm the verdant qualities of the HCA. The examples referred to which are outside the HCA had a different surrounding character to the appeal site. Accordingly, they did not in my view, represent a justified comparison with the appeal proposal.
8. I have considered the suggestion of a condition that would retain the front Laurel hedge to a specified height. This would allow for some partial screening of the proposed garage from close range views along Hook Lane. However, the garage would still likely be viewed through the driveway and when approaching from the north east where Hook Lane is more elevated. It would also be viewed from the upper floor windows of nearby properties at Malvern and Paynters where it would appear visually jarring in context with the landscaped boundary of the lane. Furthermore, I cannot be certain what effect controlling the height of the Laurel hedge may have on vehicles emerging from the appeal site.
9. I acknowledge that the Appellant's scheme incorporates a traditional design and palette of materials, however, this does not, in my view, overcome the harm that its mass and prominent siting would have on the qualities of the HCA. Nor does the fact that a neighbouring occupier has raised no objection to the appeal scheme, alter my concerns.
10. The harm I have identified in relation to the proposed garage is less than substantial in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, the proposed development would not add to the supply of housing in the area and although it may make a small contribution to the local economy in terms of the construction process, there are no public benefits that would outweigh the harm.
11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed garage fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the HCA. The scheme conflicts with Policies CS17 of

the Fareham Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, adopted August 2011, Policy DSP3 of the Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies, adopted June 2015. These, amongst other considerations, require development to respond positively to and be respectful of the key characteristics of the area, including heritage assets and that proposals take account of the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The proposal is also contrary to the provision in the SPD relating to the siting of outbuildings and garages.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R.E. Jones

INSPECTOR