

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by JP Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/D/20/3244525

7 Berens Road, Shrivenham, Swindon SN6 8EG

- 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 Andrew Rudge against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P19/V2179/HH dated 28 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2019.
 - The development is a shelter and charging point for electric vehicle.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a shelter and charging point for electric vehicle at 7 Berens Road, Shrivenham, Oxon SN6 8EG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P19/V2179/HH, dated 28 August 2019, and the plans submitted with it.

Procedural Matters

2. The shelter has been erected for about a year. The submitted plans appear to broadly reflect the development, but in any event any discrepancies are a matter for the Council. I have considered the appeal on the basis of the plans submitted.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The site is part of a housing estate built in the 1970s. There is some consistency, particularly in the use of materials, although this is slightly diluted by several solar panels and rooflights.
 5. Berens Road has a curving alignment but straightens out in the vicinity of the appeal site before joining Charlbury Road. There are some slight variations in the consistency of design along this corner as the siting, form and footprint of the dwellings are arranged to follow the curve. Several offshoot cul-de-sacs also have subtle variations in their house design. Whilst there is most consistency in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, this is short lived and wains towards Charlbury Road which has a variety of styles.
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6. Both parties describe the shelter as a cantilever structure. Two posts provide a metal frame which supports a curved transparent roof. Consequently, the structure is small and simple, which does not compete with the surrounding architecture, and therefore the consistency in the character of Berens Road is not jeopardised. The houses adjacent to the appeal site have open frontages but that is not the situation throughout Berens Road.
7. The particular construction allows views through, underneath and around, which maintains the sense of openness to the driveway. It also does not obstruct the main views along Berens Road. This is not a solid construction which could have created enclosure and threatened the sense of openness.
8. The shelter is over part of the front drive of this detached house, just in front of an integral garage. In such a domestic setting a shelter is not out of place, being seen in conjunction with the driveway.
9. The metal work is dark grey which gives a subdued appearance. Similarly, the roof, being transparent, does not compete with the dwelling. The materials are functional and lightweight which reflect the purpose and nature of the structure. There is a lamp post directly outside the curtilage, which is taller and in a more conspicuous shade of light green.
10. The structure covers the space taken up by the electric car. The structure is not unduly large and appears subservient to the host dwelling.
11. Core policy CP37 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, December 2016, promotes good design and local distinctiveness. The Shrivenham Neighbourhood Plan, Referendum Version 2020, includes policies H1 and D1 which promote good design. They also require development to be in accordance with the Village Character Assessment, and the Surrounding Berens Road (VCA) Character Assessment which highlights the consistency in the townscape. The Council has also forwarded policies HE2 and HE3 of the Neighbourhood Plan which were not part of the reason for refusal. The former, in part (b) promotes soft landscaping, and the latter refers to existing vegetation and the need to consider landscape impact. Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework also requires good design.
12. The proposal respects the characteristics of the area, in particular its general consistency and openness, and accordingly does not conflict with the above policies. Similarly, there is no need for new landscaping.
13. I therefore conclude that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

14. The Surrounding Berens Road Character Assessment also states that there are listed buildings in the neighbourhood. However, given their respective distances from the appeal site, I am satisfied that no harm to the setting of these designated heritage assets arises.

Conditions

15. As the development has been carried out, and I have found no harm, there is no need for any conditions.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposal is not harmful and the appeal should be allowed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR