



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/D/20/3255820

46 Gorse Road, Spratton, Northampton NN6 8JQ

- 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 Christopher Ralston against the decision of Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref DA/2020/0130, dated 18 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a detached garage in south west corner facing the residence with access via existing driveway and subsequent demolition of existing prefabricated garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a corner plot, occupied by a dormer bungalow, at the junction of Gorse Road and Holdenby Road. The bungalow is situated at the northern end of the plot towards the boundary with No 44 Gorse Road, leaving the southern part of the plot as a garden with a freestanding concrete panel double garage close to the dwelling. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with dwellings of a variety of ages and styles. Many of the homes close to the appeal property do not appear to have a garage at all, and where garages are found they are generally, though not always, either set to the side of or integrated within the main building of the dwelling they serve.
4. The dwellings on the north side of Holdenby Road have reasonably deep front gardens, while the south side of the road also has a wide grass verge. Gorse Road itself has a wide grass verge on the eastern side opposite the appeal site, and an angled grass verge broadens out in front No 46 at the junction with Holdenby Road. There are also street trees and planted boundaries on both roads. Although Gorse Road becomes more constrained by the dwellings on both sides north of the appeal site, and the positioning of the dwelling at No 1A Orchard Close somewhat closes off Holdenby Road east of Gorse Road, the area immediately around the appeal site has a spacious and verdant character.

5. The appeal property itself has thick evergreen planting including some tall trees along its Holdenby Road boundary, and a close boarded fence separates it from No 22B Holdenby Road. From some places these close off the site from the street. However, from other public viewpoints such as by the appeal property's driveway entrance on Gorse Road and the footways on both sides of Holdenby Road to the south east some views across the site are possible, and where these are found they also contribute to the open and spacious feel of the area.
6. The proposal is to demolish the existing garage and erect a replacement, approximately 3.8m in height and with a footprint of around 5.6m by 7.6m, at the south west corner of the site. The proposed garage would be sited next to the boundary with Holdenby Road, and consequently would have a much greater relationship with that street than with Gorse Road. The evidence before me and my observations on my site visit indicate that the proposed garage would be taller than the boundary fence, as well as some of the border planting. It would be set well forward of the front building line of the neighbouring properties at Nos 22 and 22B Holdenby Road, and this would make it a somewhat bulky and intrusive feature when seen approaching along Holdenby Road, particularly from the west. The positioning of the garage would also close down the views across the appeal site from both Gorse Road and Holdenby Road, diminishing the sense of openness and spaciousness which are a characteristic of the area.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to a long list of planning permissions granted for garages and similar developments in Spratton, and in surrounding villages in all directions. I do not know the precise circumstances of the other cases, and in any event as they are spread across a wide area most do not contribute to defining the character of the local area around the appeal site. I was however able to view the four examples elsewhere within Spratton to which I was referred. None relates to a corner plot or appears to have a similar relationship with the surrounding streets to that in this case, and they are not therefore comparable to this proposal. I also note that the dates of planning permission for the examples within Spratton range from 1983 to 2017, so all pre-date the development plan in its current form. These other examples do not therefore lend anything other than very limited weight in support of this proposal.
8. The appellant has suggested that relocating the garage would provide a safe, visible play space within the garden for his young daughter, and that it would also improve security by making the back for more visible from the road. While I am sympathetic to the appellant's aims in these respects, there is nothing to indicate that other less intrusive solutions could not be found to address these matters, and these perceived benefits therefore carry little weight overall. I agree that the existing garage appears to be, as the appellant puts it, 'a little past its best before date'. Its proposed replacement would be rendered with brick corners and a pitched tiled roof, and in these aspects of its design it would complement the existing dwelling and be in keeping with the wider area. I also acknowledge the 9 letters of support submitted by various neighbours who are supportive of the proposal. However, these factors do not outweigh the other harm I have found.
9. I conclude that the siting of the proposed garage would be harmful to the open and spacious character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies ENV10 and RA2 of the 2020 Daventry Settlements and

Countryside Local Plan (Part 2), which together seek to ensure that the massing and layout of development complements its surroundings, and that the integrity of gardens which make an important contribution to the form, character and setting of settlements is protected. The proposal also conflicts with the requirements of Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and maintains a strong sense of place.

Other Matter

10. The appellant expressed concern in his appeal statement about how the Council handled the planning application, including whether or not the Council's case officer had ever attended the site. This is something which the appellant would need to raise with the Council rather than a matter for me to address in determining this appeal. I have reached my conclusion based on the planning merits of the proposal, and find that it causes harm as described above.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector