



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2020

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/D/20/3259802

1 Newbold Road, Wellesbourne CV35 9NY

- 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 Robert Kavanagh against the decision of Stratford on Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00434/FUL, dated 11 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a wooden garden shed.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is adapted from that in the planning application form. I have omitted the reference to the application being for 'retrospective planning permission' as this is not descriptive of the development. Nonetheless, the shed is already in place, and I was able to view it at the time of my site visit. I have considered the appeal on the basis that the development has been carried out.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is the large corner garden of No 1 Newbold Road, the end property in a short block of four houses on the west side of Newbold Road close to its junction with Warwick Road/ Kineton Road. These dwellings, and the neighbouring blocks at 9-15 Newbold Road and 1-5 Warwick Road are set well back from the street boundary. Although the appeal site itself has a relatively high hedge to the street, most of the front gardens have low fence or hedge borders, which combined with the depth of the gardens gives the area an open and spacious character. This sense of spaciousness is further emphasised by the broad grass verges around the Newbold Road/Warwick Road/Kineton Road junction. The appeal site itself is in a prominent location on the junction, and the size and shape of the plot, as well as the generous physical separation between 1 Newbold Road and 1 Warwick Road, mean that it makes a significant contribution to the open character of the surrounding area.

5. The appellant has erected a wooden shed at the southern corner of the appeal site, close to the Newbold Road/Warwick Road junction and the garden of No 1 Warwick Road. It is relatively large as garden sheds go, at around 4.8m by 5.8m with a maximum height of around 2.7m. The Council's adopted Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Document advises that the siting of domestic outbuildings and external garages should take account of local context, and in order to retain the primacy of the dwelling as the most important feature of the plot they should not be built in front of the dwelling.
6. In this case, the shed sits well in front of the building line of No 1 Newbold Road and its neighbours. From the evidence before me and my observations on my site visit, sheds, garages and other outbuildings are not common features of front gardens in the locality, and the siting of the shed is therefore at odds with the general pattern of development in the area. From Warwick Road and Newbold Road, it intrudes into the intermittent medium and short-range views across front gardens which are otherwise possible. In so doing it disrupts the prevailing openness of the area, harming its spacious character. From the Kineton Road direction the shed is almost entirely screened by the garden's boundary hedge, and the appellant has indicated that if this hedge were to die other screening it would be replaced or other screening such as a new fence would be put in place. However, if more, or higher, screening were to be introduced this would increase rather than mitigate the harm to the area's spacious feel.
7. The appellant has indicated that the shed is used for storing and working on his 4x4 racing vehicle, and I am sympathetic towards his wish to have a suitable space in which to support his hobby. However, the private benefit to him of having the shed in which to do this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area I have found. The appellant has provided photographs of recently-built houses nearby with garages in their front gardens. I do not know the location or precise details of that scheme, but the fact that it is a new build housing estate suggests that the siting of garages in front of dwellings is a feature of the development and therefore part of its character and appearance. This is not a consideration which applies in this case. I acknowledge that the size and siting of the shed causes no harm to neighbours' living conditions, but this is a neutral factor which does not weigh in favour of the scheme.
8. I conclude that, because of its size and siting, the shed is harmful to the spacious and open character and appearance of the area. The development therefore conflicts with Policies CS.9 and CS.20 of the 2016 Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy which together seek to ensure that development reflects local distinctiveness, including that outbuildings should be appropriate in scale and siting, and preserve the character of the locality.

Conclusion

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

M Cryan

Inspector