
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 January 2021

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/20/3260785

21 Cromwell Road, Basingstoke RG21 5NR

- 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 D Wrey against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00699/FUL, dated 10 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of a garage following demolition of existing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's second reason for refusal relates to insufficient information to demonstrate the protection of surrounding trees. Both parties have confirmed that, subsequent to the refusal, the closest tree to the appeal site, a mature Sycamore within the garden of no.23, has been removed following Council consent granted on 15 September 2020. Accordingly, given the distance between the proposal and other protected trees within the vicinity of the site, the Council is now satisfied that tree protection can be dealt with by means of a condition, and that the second reason for refusal has been withdrawn. Following my site inspection, I have no reason to disagree with this and I have dealt with the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the South View Conservation Area (SVCA).

Reasons

4. The appeal property, comprising 5 flats, lies on the north side of Cromwell Road, within an established residential area within the SVCA. Vehicular access is from Cromwell Road and serves a detached, single garage and parking area to the rear of the building. The parking area, driveway and front garden area are all given over to gravelled surfacing, and the driveway is shared with the adjacent property.
5. Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* (the Act) requires that with respect to development affecting buildings or other land in a conservation area, 'special attention shall be paid to the

desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.' In addition, Paragraph 193 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

6. The *South View Conservation Area Appraisal* (2006) (SVCAA) states that the essence of the conservation area is of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties, predominantly of two stories in height and dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The site lies within the character area comprising the principal residential zone running from Burgess Road northwards to Darlington Road. The SVCAA notes that Cromwell Road is characterised by detached houses mixed with semi-detached villas, and no terraces.
7. 21 Cromwell Road is an attractive property and is a typical example of such development, comprising one half of a pair of semi-detached, two and a half storey, residential properties, which are symmetrically designed. They date back to the late 19th Century/early 20th Century, and are constructed of brick walls under a slate pitched roof. Design detailing includes projecting two storey front bays with contrasting rendered elements, curved window and door headers, decorative barge boards and roof ridge tiles, and a central feature chimney.
8. The property is designated as a 'notable building' within the SVCAA, together with a large number of other dwellings within the SVCA, including the stretch of properties from no.3 to no.23 Cromwell Road and some dwellings on the opposite side of the road. The SVCAA notes that the large number of notable buildings contribute to the special interest of the SVCA, due to their level of historic integrity, architectural quality, or because they are of particular interest in illustrating the development of South View. As such, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the significance of the SVCA.
9. The existing flat-roofed single garage is visible in views from the public realm in Cromwell Road through the driveway space between the appeal property and no.19. It is viewed as being a subsidiary, low key building, which sits comfortably at the rear of the site. It does not compete visually with the host property, and allows views through to the residential property behind the appeal site. The size and positioning of the existing garage is in keeping with that of other garages I observed within the road. As such, the positive contribution made to the street scene by the appeal property and other identified notable buildings within Cromwell Road, has not been harmfully eroded by unduly large and visually prominent garaging.
10. The proposed replacement garage would be significantly wider and higher than that which it would replace, and it would include a notably larger and bulkier roof form. The building footprint would occupy a large part of the small rear external amenity area of the site, extending close to the west side and rear boundaries. Its width would be greater than that of the two-storey rear projecting element of the host property, and its height greater than that of the single storey element at the rear. These factors combine to emphasise the uncomfortably large size of the new building in relation to the main residential property and its curtilage. The proposed deep pitched roof and first floor height window and roof lights would further serve to draw attention to the height and scale of the garage.

11. Accordingly, due to its height, mass, scale, and position on the site, the proposed garage would relate poorly to, and assume an unduly visually prominent appearance in relation to, the host property, an identified notable building within the SVCA. The garage would not respect its setting or appear visually subservient to the host property. The resulting discordant relationship with the building would be readily apparent in views from the street, due to its proposed siting at the end of the access drive directly opposite the site entrance. It would also be apparent in views from neighbouring properties. As such, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of this part of the SVCA, having a negative effect upon the significance of the heritage asset.
12. The proposed use of materials to match those of the host property does not outweigh my aforementioned concerns regarding the scale and design of the proposed building.
13. The statutory duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is a matter of considerable importance and weight. In terms of the advice in Paragraph 196 of the Framework, the harm to the SVCA would be '*less than substantial*'. Consequently, the Framework sets out the need to address the '*less than substantial harm*' in a balanced manner against the public benefits associated with the proposal. In doing so, however, paragraph 193 of the Framework also states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of the degree of harm that might be caused to its significance. In this instance, no public benefits have been put forward in respect of the development to weigh against this harm.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the SVCA. It would therefore be contrary to Policies EM10 and EM11 of the *Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029* (2016) and the *Heritage Supplementary Planning Document* (2019). These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality, positively contributes to the appearance of streets, has due regard to the scale and layout of the surrounding area and the relationship to neighbouring buildings, and conserves or enhances the quality, distinctiveness and character of heritage assets.
15. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies of Chapter 16 of the Framework in respect of the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Other Matters

16. I acknowledge that the proposal represents an amended scheme from that originally submitted as part of the planning application, including a reduction in the height and depth of the proposed garage and the removal of first floor annexe accommodation. However, this does not alter my findings in respect of the current proposal.
17. I note that the proposal would provide a more practical size of garaged parking, having regard to the floor area dimensions. However, this does not justify allowing a building of the scale and design proposed in this location, having regard to my concerns in respect of its impact on the SVCA.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed

S Leonard

INSPECTOR