



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 18 May 2021

by James Blackwell LLB (Hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3269697

16 Heronslea, Watford WD25 9PN

- 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 Alagendran Natarajan against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01403/FULH, dated 27 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a retrospective planning consent for a shipping container (20ft long) in front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the appellant's application form, the description of development included details relating to the purpose and history of the development. To ensure clarity in the description of development in this decision, I have removed these additional details which are not pertinent to the physical description of the development carried out and used the Council's description of the proposed development which is more accurate.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached maisonette with its own private garden bordering the road to the side of the property, which is largely enclosed by a 1.8m closeboarded timber fence. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, with most dwellings set back from the road by virtue of their open front gardens. The road itself follows a half crescent shape and the appeal property is located centrally on the inner arc of this crescent.
5. The development has been sited at the rear of the appeal property's garden. Whilst the garden fence does mean the development is partially obscured from view, due to the height of the shipping container it is still clearly visible from the road. Given the location of the appeal property on the central arc of the crescent, the container is visible from numerous properties along the road, most notably number 14 Heronslea – the frontage of which looks directly over the garden in which the container is located.

6. The shipping container has no windows and has a grey metallic finish which gives it a stark industrial appearance. Together with the height of the container, these industrial features mean that the development appears visually prominent and incongruous within the residential nature of the site and the street scene of this residential road, and is consequently significantly alien and harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The commercial use of this structure in a residential garden is also completely inappropriate.
7. The fact that the container is sited on the footprint of a former domestic garage adds nothing to its merits because domestic garages are commonplace and entirely appropriate next to domestic dwellings whereas shipping containers used for commercial purposes are entirely inappropriate for the above reasons.
8. For these reasons, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area, and therefore conflicts with policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006 – 31. These policies seek to ensure that new development protects and enhances the character of the area in which it is located through the use of high-quality design.

Other Matters

9. I acknowledge that the development is used in connection with a grocery business which is important to the appellant's family's income. However, as set out above, such a use with its associated unacceptable structure is entirely inappropriate in a residential garden.

Conclusion

10. The proposed development conflicts with policies SS1 and UD1 of the development plan because it harms the character and appearance of the area. For this reason, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

James Blackwell

INSPECTOR