The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 2 June 2021

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/21/3270161
5 Magnolia Dene, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 7QE

- 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 Miss L Adwoa Manish Osei against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
- The application Ref 20/06780/FUL, dated 29 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2020.
- The development proposed is erection of new dwelling house with associated parking, demolition of existing garage, erection of replacement garage.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a house with a large garden on the corner of Magnolia Dene and Spruce Dene. It lies in a residential area where detached dwellings in wide plots and set back from the road are prevalent. Trees and bushes around the residences help create a pleasant, vegetated and spacious environment.

4. Despite being behind the front elevation of the existing house, the proposed dwelling would be clearly visible from the road. The replacement garage would be on the corner side of the site and so it would be seen from Spruce Dene as well as Magnolia Dene. As such, the development would have a noticeable effect on the street scene.

5. The house would be close to the flank wall of the existing property and the proposed side boundary. Also, it would be near to the boundary with 3 Magnolia Dene, albeit that the length of the back garden would lie between the neighbouring house and the proposed dwelling. Moreover, the replacement garage would bring the existing property visibly nearer to Spruce Dene. As such, the proposal would go against the general development pattern of houses set away from plot boundaries, from each other and from the road.

6. A single storey side garage would maintain a degree of space at first floor level between the proposed house and the appeal property. Nevertheless, the development would lead to a marked loss of openness and would result in a sense of the proposed and existing houses occupying an unusually large proportion of the site's width. The erosion of space and the untypical proximity of the houses to each other would be incompatible with the area's qualities.

The sympathetic design, scale and orientation of the proposal to the road would fail to address or override this incompatibility.

7. I have been referred to other permitted developments that involve the sub-division of plots to accommodate additional dwellings. However, none of these are seen with the appeal property and so they have no meaningful influence on the site and its immediate surroundings. As such, the other schemes do not set a precedent that I am bound to follow in the determination of this appeal.

8. For the above reasons, I conclude the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. In these regards, it would not accord with policies CP9 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan 2019. Amongst other things, these require development to respect the distinctive character of the area.

Other Matters

9. Given the particular attributes of the site, its surroundings and of the proposal, I am satisfied that there is no reasonable prospect of similar development being proposed nearby. As such, a precedent would not be set if I was to allow the appeal. However, this is a neutral factor in my consideration which fails to override the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

10. The proposal would add to the housing stock and would make more effective use of a small site within an existing settlement. I attribute positive weight to these factors in my assessment. However, due to the identified harm, the proposal would not accord with the policies of the development plan when read as a whole. The benefits of the scheme are modest given that a single unit is proposed. As such, they are of insufficient weight to allow the appeal contrary to development plan policies.

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

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR