



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 7 June 2021

by Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/D/21/3269015

10 Southbrooke Close, Trumpington, Cambridge

- 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 T Rogan against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/03211/HFUL, dated 13 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is a cycle store (resubmission of 19/1433/FUL (part)).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As was apparent upon inspection, the proposed cycle store is already in place on-site. I shall consider the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The effect upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is in a residential area often defined by rows of similarly designed houses setback broadly consistent distances from the highway. Front garden areas local to the site are often well-vegetated and tend to be demarked by low-level picket fencing. There is thus a formal, spacious and green residential character and appearance in place locally.
5. The cycle store that has been erected (the store) sits adjacent to Southbrooke Close (the Close) and is comprised of hoops fixed to a concrete base surrounded by timber hit-and-miss enclosures and topped with corrugated roof sheeting. Various elements of established planting are positioned adjacent to or near to the store. This planting intercepts or significantly softens views of the structure when experienced from a range of local vantage points.
6. Even so, owing to its front-of-plot positioning, the store has a distinct visual presence when experienced from various locations within the Close. Indeed, notwithstanding the natural colouring of its timber enclosures, the store sits uncomfortably in a location defined by green front garden areas that are often bounded by low-level picket fences. The store appears as a discordant feature in the streetscene.
7. It has been suggested that the store guards against the potential for cycles to be left untidily in the property's front garden or outside the site. However,

cycles left/stored in such fashions would be anticipated to have limited visual impact. This is most particularly when compared to the store's influence.

8. For the above reasons, the store causes harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with Policies 55, 56 and 59 of the Cambridge Local Plan (October 2018) (the Local Plan) in so far as these policies set out that development will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings.
9. For the avoidance of doubt, Policy 58 of the Local Plan is of limited relevance to my considerations. This is because it refers to altering and extending existing buildings. The proposal that is before me instead relates to a newly constructed structure.

Other Matters

10. The store offers occupiers of the appeal property the opportunity to store cycles securely and in a covered, hard-surfaced environment. Its presence thus promotes the utilisation of sustainable modes of transportation, which is a benefit of the scheme. I shall now consider the degree of weight that should be apportioned to this benefit.
11. Whilst it is my understanding that the property is in multiple occupation, it is not so large to realistically attract high volumes of cycles and associated movements to and from the site. It is also relevant to consider the potential for less visually prominent alternative storage options to exist on-site. Even should practical difficulties/constraints be associated with accommodating cycle storage within the property's rear garden space, a stepped back, lower, and thus less prominent alternative structure would, to my mind, be capable of being provided to the front of the site whilst delivering the same (or a similar) level of functionality to that currently provided by the store. Indeed, any claim that the store's roof height is critical to allow access for a range of bike sizes has not been robustly substantiated. Taking the above factors into account, I attach limited weight to the scheme's benefit of promoting sustainable travel.
12. It has been suggested that the store's existence means that mud is not trawled on to the Close. However, particularly when noting the low number of movements realistically anticipated, the potential for cycles to trawl meaningful quantities of mud off-site is minimal. Thus, even when acknowledging the potential for the store to promote reduced trips via motor vehicle, any possible highway safety benefits of the scheme attract limited weight.
13. The scheme's benefits would be modest and insufficient to outweigh the not insignificant degree of harm that I have identified is caused to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR