



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2021 by A Coombes

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/21/3273299

Site Address Applecroft, Bishops Road, Tutts Clump, Reading RG7 6JU

- 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 G Harwood against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02935/HOUSE, dated 10 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is the installation of up and over doors to existing car port.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. The application was submitted retrospectively, and the appeal has therefore been considered on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is located in Tutts Clump, a small residential settlement within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD AONB). Applecroft is a detached property that forms a pair and sits within a linear row of houses that otherwise vary in design and age. The appeal relates to the building sited close to the front boundary, which was originally a car port. The car port was previously allowed at appeal and subject to a condition that prevented the addition of doors and other infilling. However, the proposal seeks retrospective permission to add up and over garage doors.
6. Several properties along Bishops Road host detached garages made from various materials such as brick or render. Although these form part of the character of the area, they are generally set back and less prominent than the car port at Applecroft. Beacon, which is located immediately next door to the appeal site, has a similar, though larger, timber-framed car port. The front elevation of the appeal building is only visible from one direction. Furthermore,

when approaching along Bishops Road, there is limited visibility of the front elevation from a distance as the car port at Beacon acts as a screen until you are almost upon Applecroft. However, due to being sited so close to the front boundary, the appeal building is in public view and does have a significant presence within the street scene, if only for a limited time or distance.

7. Whilst up and over doors have been introduced behind the timber detailing of the original structure, in an attempt to be sympathetic to the rural design, the open nature of the car port has been lost. The introduction of the suburban style doors to the barn like structure, and the resulting enclosed character, make the building appear as a suburbanised addition that fails to respond to the rural character of the immediate area. As a result, the addition of the doors is harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
8. It is understood that doors would provide security for the charging of electric cars. However, carports are a viable option for the storage of vehicles and many electric vehicles are charged in the open. The added security from doors does not outweigh the harm that has been found to the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, although the development would allow for the retention of adequate parking and turning, this is a neutral matter, and also does not mitigate or outweigh the harm identified.
9. It seems that the appellant was not aware of the planning condition which restricts the enclosing of the carport and concerns have also been raised relating to the application process. These matters have been taken into account, however in themselves these matters do not alter the key planning merits of this case and so they do not outweigh the harm identified.
10. For the reasons given above the introduction of up and over doors to the appeal building has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it does not accord with Policies CS 14 and CS 19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document, adopted 2012 (WBCS). Together these policies ensure high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character, appearance, and local distinctiveness of an area, particularly landscapes or settlements that are sensitive to change. Furthermore, the development contravenes Policy C6 of the West Berkshire Council Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026), adopted 2017. This Policy supports a presumption in favour of alterations that have no adverse impact on local rural character.
11. Given the localised nature of the development there would be no direct harm to the scenic beauty of the NWD AONB and therefore the development does not contravene the relevant section of the National Planning Policy Framework which deals with areas of outstanding natural beauty or Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 of the WBCS. This, however, does not mitigate the conflict with the Policies identified above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. The proposal does not accord with the Development Plan when it is considered as a whole. For the reasons given above, I recommend the appeal should be dismissed.

A Coombes

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR