



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2021

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3273915

2 Robins Grove, West Wickham, BR4 9DH

- 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 and Mrs R Blake against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/21/00504/FULL6, dated 1 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is a detached double garage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located along Robins Grove, which forms one of a number of streets in the local area which appears to be a speculative housing development from the mid-twentieth century. The topography of the land in this locality is quite steep with land sloping from north to south. Robins Grove runs west to east and ends in a cul-de-sac which contains dwellings on the north side, whereas the south side of the road fronts the rear of dwellings along Hatfield Crescent and contains detached garages which serve these dwellings. The development along Robins Grove consists of single and two storey dwellings, many of the single storey dwellings having accommodation within the roof space. The dwellings have similar setbacks and positioning in relation to the street where the front gardens slope down from the front of the dwelling to the road. Each of the dwellings have a low front boundary wall, visual gaps in and around properties which together with street trees reinforces a green and spacious character that is a positive characteristic of the locality.
4. The appeal site displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the street scene, being one of the single storey properties which is positioned alongside similarly designed single storey dwellings to either side with open front gardens which slope down to the road with low front boundary walls.
5. In undertaking development, the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan 2019 (LP) Policy 37 seeks to ensure that the general design of development be of a high standard and that proposals are compatible with the scale, proportion, form, layout and character of the locality; and positively contributes to the existing street scene, amongst others.

6. The applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) notes that there are examples of garages within front gardens along Harvest Bank Road and Hatfield Crescent which are located nearby. Sites along Harvest Bank Road and Hatfield Crescent do appear to have a much steeper slope to the front garden and given the construction, design and age of some of the garages (particularly along Harvest Bank Road) appear to be contemporary to the dwellings as part of the overall design process which leaves a large front garden in addition to the garage. Whilst I agree with the applicant that garages in front gardens are characteristics of the broader locality, this is not the case along Robins Grove where the overriding characteristic is of large open front garden areas. Whilst I also note that No.6 Robins Grove has a single detached garage to the front garden of the dwelling, the dwelling itself is significantly set back from the street scene and maintains a large front garden area with a garage that is much smaller than the appeal proposal. I am therefore not convinced that the two properties have similar considerations or characteristics and that the presence of this garage reflects the prevailing characteristics of this particular street scene.
7. The proposal would consist of a double garage which would front the street and take much of the front garden area, removing the spacious character of the area and introducing further built form. Whilst attempts have been made to reduce the appearance of the proposed garage by placing the garage at a lower level than the dwelling, it would have an awkward and discordant appearance when seen within this particular group of dwellings. The removal of the open front garden space would also be detrimental to the spacious quality of the street scene which is a positive characteristic.
8. Taken as a whole, and in conclusion of this matter, the proposed detached garage would cause unacceptable detriment towards the architectural authenticity and integrity of the existing building and cause harm towards the character and appearance of the immediate surrounding locality. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to the LP Policy 37 as described previously.
9. I note that the Council's Decision Notice refers to LP Policy 6 as a reason for refusal which relates to residential extensions and the enlargement or alteration of existing residential dwellings. As the development of a detached garage is not an extension or alteration to an existing dwelling, this policy is not relevant and I have therefore disregarded this policy in my decision.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR