



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 19 July 2021

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/D/21/3267609

34 Warsash Road, Warsash, Southampton SO31 9HX

- 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 Christopher Davison against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/20/1078/FP, dated 22 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is a garage and front boundary wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's decision was made with regard to the plan submitted at application stage¹. With the appeal the appellant submitted an amended plan² and had previously provided this plan to the Council after its decision. The amended plan includes the proposed garage in the 'Warsash Road boundary wall elevation' and in a new 'Church Road boundary wall elevation'. The amended plan provides additional clarity about the proposal and does not materially alter the nature of the development. Having regard to the 'Wheatcroft Principles'³, the amended plan would not therefore cause prejudice to any party. I have dealt with the appeal on the basis of the amended plan.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2021. The main parties were given an opportunity to comment on any changes they considered to be relevant to this case. No comments were received. I have taken the Framework into account in my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. No 34 Warsash Road is a semi-detached two-storey house located in a mainly residential built-up area of Warsash. The house and front garden faces Warsash Road and are side on to Church Road, at one corner of a T-junction (the junction).

¹ Drawing number PA20-140:01 Rev A.

² Drawing number PA20-140:01 Rev B.

³ *Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE* [JPL 1982 P37].

6. Near the appeal site and the junction, development along both sides of these two roads is mostly residential buildings in linear frontages. In Church Road buildings are close to the road on both sides. In the immediate approach to the junction from the east along Warsash Road, most buildings either side are sited close to the road, including the houses opposite the junction on the north side.
7. At the junction, Warsash Road curves gently to the south. The building line on the north side, and as it extends away from the junction to the west, diverges from the road. There is an increasingly more pronounced set back of buildings, with longer front gardens or forecourts. On the south side of Warsash Road, the last house next to the junction (on the east side) has a wide front elevation at an angle to the road such that at one end, next to the corner, it is noticeably set back. This deeper arrangement of built form on the south side of Warsash Road continues as a building line from this point to the west, with longer front gardens or forecourts, including at the appeal site on the counterpart corner of the junction.
8. Property boundaries along the frontages of Warsash Road and Church Road include mostly lower level hedgerow, fences, garden walls and some taller trees. There are no outbuildings or structures (including garages) of any substance sited appreciably forward of the prevailing general building lines in these roads in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site or at the junction.
9. This pattern of built form and largely open front gardens, and the transition in Warsash Road at the junction from a tighter road corridor of development to the east to a wider, more open and spacious junction and road corridor to the west, is locally distinctive.
10. In public views from Church Road, on the approach to the junction, the garage would broadly follow the general building line on the west side of this road, including the new house and tall boundary wall on the south side of the appeal site. The floorplan of the garage would fit into the available space in this part of the front garden, close to the house. It would be satisfactory in design and materials and in these regards would be in keeping with the appellant's house.
11. However, the siting of the garage would nonetheless protrude into, and occupy most of, the nub of this part of the front garden closest to Warsash Road and would encroach significantly towards the corner of the junction. As a result, whilst in public views from Warsash Road in both directions the single storey garage would be seen in the context of taller buildings, it would nonetheless plainly be located prominently in front of No 34. In combination with its external dimensions, it would therefore be unduly conspicuous. In addition, even if the front garden boundary hedgerow and tree were retained (or replaced by new planting) the scale and massing of the garage would nonetheless unduly erode the intrinsic openness of this part of the appeal site.
12. Furthermore, while the garage would have no physical effect on the geometry of the junction, its wide splays, footways and grassed verges (which contribute to the open, spacious nature of the junction), it would nonetheless significantly reduce spaciousness on this corner of the junction beyond the highway boundary and at the junction viewed as a whole. Moreover, and in any event, the siting of the garage would be inherently at odds with the prevailing pattern of development considering the absence of outbuildings forward of the general building line along the frontages of both sides of this part of Warsash Road as it

extends away from the junction to the west. The garage would therefore have a significant overall negative effect in the Warsash Road streetscene.

13. I have been referred to some other garages elsewhere in Warsash. I do not have full details of these or a location plan. Warsash Road and Church Road are long roads and the former is not straight. Most of these garages do not therefore have any meaningful visual or spatial relationship to the appeal site and accordingly are not part of the relevant context for assessing the proposed garage. These garages and their siting in relation to roads and other buildings is not, in any event, the same as in this appeal, including the closest at No 4 Church Road. While this garage is sited forward of the house, it is not on a corner, does not breach the general building line and is not a prevailing pattern of built form. These garages can therefore be distinguished from the proposed garage and as a result do not provide a compelling precedent. I have, in any event, determined this appeal on its individual planning merits.
14. Considering the above, I find that the garage would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would not comply with Policy CS17 of the Fareham Core Strategy, August 2011. This policy includes that development should respond positively to, and respect, key characteristics of the area, including scale, form and spaciousness, continuity of built form and distinctiveness. It would also conflict with the associated provisions of the Council's Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, December 2015; in particular, for new buildings in front gardens. It would also not be consistent with the Framework which seeks to ensure that development adds to the overall quality of the area, is visually attractive as a result of good layout, is sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and maintains a strong sense of place using the arrangements of streets, spaces and building types to create attractive and distinctive places to live.

Other Matters

15. I am sympathetic to the appellant's desire to improve his family's living conditions and enjoyment of their home, including replacing a utilitarian garage in the rear garden. Nevertheless, the proposed garage would likely remain long after these considerations have ceased to be material. Moreover, and in any event, these personal circumstances do not overcome the harm that I have identified in the main issue above.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

16. Notwithstanding the otherwise acceptable inherent design and appearance of the proposed garage, and as it would relate to Church Road, I have found that it would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area along Warsash Road, including at the junction. Consequently, it would not accord with the development plan overall. There are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding.
17. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR