

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2021

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/21/3276132

Holly Cottage, 10 South Park Crescent, Gerrards Cross SL9 8HJ

- 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 Ms Nadine Dereza against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/20/4086/FA, dated 1 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of a detached garage and bin store, and alterations to driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a detached garage and bin store, and alterations to driveway at Holly Cottage, 10 South Park Crescent, Gerrards Cross SL9 8HJ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. PL/20/4086/FA, dated 1 December 2020, subject to the conditions set out below:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 20/ND/001 Rev. A.
 3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with the approved plans and the planning application form.
 4. The proposed new hedging as shown on drawing number 20/ND/001 Rev. A shall be composed of semi-mature pre-grown evergreen Laurel Bay (*Laurus Nobilis*) of a minimum 1.8m height, and shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the development hereby permitted. Any plants, which within a period of five years from the occupation of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The site is situated within a well established residential area whereby much development has gone on in recent years and is ongoing on certain plots. Outbuildings and other structures are located within some frontages which are clearly visible within the street scene. The appeal site itself comprises a detached chalet-style house with a gravel drive located behind a high laurel hedge, the driveway is on higher ground than the adjacent road although not significantly so.
4. I acknowledge that the guidance set within the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study highlights that the site falls within a Green Suburban Road typology and which advises that garages should be placed in-line with buildings or behind properties, not at the front of the plot. However ultimately each case must be assessed on its own merits, including having regard to the built context that the proposal finds itself situated within.
5. The garage would be viewed against the backdrop of the host dwelling as well as Juniper Cottage to the north west. The existing and enhanced boundary hedging would screen the garage to a reasonable degree which itself would be designed in a manner that would be respectful of the architecture of Holly Cottage, with traditional proportions and roof pitches. Overall I consider that the proposed outbuilding would appear subservient in form to the cottage notwithstanding its forward positioning.
6. I accept that in some cases existing outbuildings within the locality may be of a smaller scale, although that it is not necessarily always the case. Further I accept that when including the bin store that the proposed development would extend across approximately 10m of the plot frontage, although this element would be much lower than the main ridge of the garage aspect which itself would only be situated in front of a single storey accretion to the northern side of Holly Cottage. I therefore consider that it would not compete visually with either it or the aforementioned house next door from which a reasonable level of outlook would be maintained.
7. I note the third party comments with regard to discrepancies of the plan, but as highlighted by the Council's Officer report, excavation works and the impact of levels need to be taken into account; I have been given no substantive reason to come to a different conclusion on this, whilst bearing in mind that that the rear (north west) elevation of the garage runs parallel to the boundary giving rise to an asymmetric footprint.
8. I consider that notwithstanding the proposed height of the garage on land that is elevated above the public highway, that it would not appear as an unduly bulky or prominent structure within the street scene; and consequently would protect the character and appearance of the area. I find the proposal complies with Policies EP3 and H13, along with Appendix 8 of the South Bucks District Local Plan which require a development's scale, layout, siting, height, design, external materials and use are compatible with the character and amenities of the site itself, adjoining development and the locality in general; and would appear very subordinate in scale to the existing dwelling. I find no direct conflict between the proposal and the National Design Guide either, specifically characteristic C1 "Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider

context” or the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to achieve well designed places.

Other Matters

9. I note the comments raised by the third parties with regard to parking facilities, however it is quite clear that the local Highway Authority raise no objection to the proposal on grounds of highway safety and I have been given no substantive reasons to come to a different conclusion on this.

Conclusion and Conditions

10. Therefore for the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.
11. Other than the standard time limit condition, the Council recommends that conditions are imposed that require the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and that the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development to be in accordance with them and the application form. I consider this and the requirement that any new planting of the laurel hedge to the frontage should be carried out in accordance with that identified on the submitted floor plan within the first available planting season are reasonable, in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area.
12. The Council also recommends that a condition be imposed that requires the use of the permitted building to be solely for purposes ancillary to the primary use of the site as a dwelling. I am not convinced as to the need for this because any material change of use would require planning permission. Consequently I consider it unnecessary to impose a condition to that effect.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR