



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2021

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/21/3275428

23 Barncroft Road, Berkhamstead, HP4 3NL

- 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 Paul Gibbs against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00563/FHA, dated 29 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, new linked double garage with home office over and attached garden and cycle store to side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey rear extension and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at 23 Barncroft Road, Berkhamstead, HP4 3NL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00563/FHA, dated 29 January 2021, subject to the following conditions:-
 - 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 plans: 2795.06A; 2795.07; 2795.09A; 2795.20 insofar as they relate to the single storey rear extension only.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
2. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the new linked double garage with home office over and attached garden/cycle store to side.

Procedural matter

3. The appellant submitted additional plans during the course of the appeal to omit a dormer on the east elevation of the garage and to provide a full view of the south elevation. As those plans simply provide clarity, I have taken them into account in this appeal.

Reasons

4. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies CS11 and CS12 in the Council's Core Strategy (2013) which together seek to ensure that developments are of good quality design that respects adjoining properties and preserves attractive streetscapes.

5. Barncroft Road is a long residential cul-de-sac of large dwellings of different periods and styles generally set well back on large plots, whose irregular building line, variety, spaciousness and leafiness contribute positively to the attractive character of the area.
6. The appeal site is located at the head of the cul-de-sac. It comprises a large, hipped roof two storey dwelling that has been extended to one side of its front elevation. It has a traditional character with Arts and Crafts style features but has a more contemporary white rendered finish. At my visit I saw that at present the front of the property and long views down Barncroft Road are well screened due to planting within the appeal site and in surrounding front gardens.
7. The Council has not objected to the proposed rear extension or side garden/cycle store and from what I have seen I am satisfied that those parts of the proposed development are acceptable in terms of siting, size, scale, form and detail with regard to their impact on the character and appearance of the area.
8. Its objections relate to the scale, height and siting of the proposed garage/home office block which would be attached to front of the garden/cycle store. It would project forward of the main wall of the dwelling by some 9m and would have a gabled roof with small hipped sections at the front and rear. A previous planning application was withdrawn following the Council's concerns regarding the scale of the proposed garage and its proximity to the front boundary of the dwelling's curtilage. The amended scheme has not reduced the height of the garage.
9. Whilst most dwellings in the street have garages that are in line with the dwelling or set back, there are several here and in the wider area which have projecting garages and I have noted below the other examples referred to by the appellant. Although there are significant differences between those schemes and this one in terms of scale, they do provide some justification for the siting of a garage block forward of the building line in this case. The proposed siting would not be uncharacteristic of the street and is therefore acceptable.
10. However, at some 7m in length, it would be only slightly less than the side elevation of the dwelling (even taking into account the front projecting gable). Although the ridge would be some 2m lower than that of the main ridge of the house, it would have a length of some 5m which would result in an excessively bulky roof. The length and height of the proposal and in particular the ridge, would therefore result in a disproportionate addition to the dwelling. Whilst the tall Scots Pine tree on the front boundary would be retained, some of the existing conifer trees within the site would be removed and the building would be seen in the approach towards the head of the cul-de-sac, notwithstanding planting in neighbouring front gardens. Any new planting would take some time to become established and, in any case, screening by planting does not provide justification for a disproportionate development. Thus, in terms of scale and height the proposal is unacceptable.
11. The other examples given by the appellant include a garage block at no 21 which has a much lower height and greater subservience to the main dwelling than in this case. The projection at no 19A forms part of an extension to the main part of the house and is shorter in length than the proposed garage block

with greater subservience to that dwelling. The two houses opposite at 8 and 8a also have shorter projections. I have given careful consideration to the large quadruple garage block which forms part of a dwelling currently under construction at no 11 and is sited much closer to the road than in this case. That building is larger than that proposed here but there is a significant difference. The length of the ridge of each block is much shorter than in this case and it therefore appears much less bulky. I am not persuaded, therefore, that any of the examples given are sufficiently comparable to set a precedent for this proposal.

12. Given the variety of materials seen in the street, the proposed feather edge boarding materials would be acceptable if all other matters were. They would accord with the Arts and Crafts style of the house and would reflect those found in the wider, rural area, provided they were finished in a dark stain.
13. However, I conclude that by reason of its scale and height, the proposed garage/home office block would significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area, contrary to the development plan policies referred to above. There are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict.

Other matter

14. The Council has raised no objection in terms of the effect on neighbouring occupiers' living conditions and from what I have seen the proposal would be acceptable in this regard.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard commencement condition, a condition is necessary requiring that the rear extension is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, in order to provide certainty. A condition requiring matching external materials is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

Conclusion

16. As it is clear that the rear extension is physically separate from the garage block, I shall issue a split decision to allow that part of the proposals. The garden/cycle store is attached so I am therefore unable to issue a split decision in respect of that. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the rear extension and dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed garage/home office block and garden/cycle store.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector