
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2021

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/21/3283043

Costa Cottage, Bromley Green Road, Ruckinge, Kent TN26 2EQ

- 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 Hodger Hilden against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00945/AS, dated 24 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is a garage with storeroom over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene; and
 - whether the proposal would adversely affect nearby trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The proposal is for a detached double garage with a storeroom at first floor level on the gravel car parking area next to Costa Cottage. The cottage lies on the southern side of Bromley Green Road at the western end of the frontage development which lines both sides of the road in an otherwise rural area.
4. Costa Cottage itself is a modest bungalow with a fully hipped roof which forms a low profile conclusion to the group of substantial chalet bungalows to its east. In this context, the proposed two-storey garage/store building, situated well to the side of the plot next to woodland and well forward of the cottage, would appear unduly bulky and overly prominent in the street scene. According to the Council it would only be about 3 m from the road and a full 6.9 m high to the ridge. Two overly bulky dormers rising almost to the ridge and filling most of the roof slope would add to the intrusive appearance.
5. The appellant argues that the proposal would be no larger than other similar developments in the Borough and lists a number of applications where it is said large garages have been permitted close to the highway. Nearby on Bromley Green Road are numerous large-scale properties. However, no details of these

cases are provided and during the site visit no directly comparable detached double garage/storage buildings were seen along the road. In any event, the scale and situation of Costa Cottage are unique such that examples elsewhere would not be relevant in this instance.

6. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the street scene in conflict with Policies SP1 and SP6 of the Ashford Local Plan 2019 (ALP) and the Council's SPG9 'Domestic Garages and Outbuildings in Urban and Rural Areas'. These require development to respond to the prevailing character of the area and to be of high quality design, and new garages and outbuildings to be visually subservient in terms of size, scale and bulk to the dwelling that it will serve.

Trees

7. The proposed site of the garage/store lies close to the property boundary adjacent to a substantial area of woodland. Whether this is ancient woodland is disputed but the root protection area of individual trees to the south-west and on the road frontage may be affected given the siting proposed. Whilst the appellant states that the nearest trees are at least 7 m away, in the absence of an accurate survey and arboricultural report specific to this proposal the trees concerned could be adversely affected. This would be contrary to ALP Policy ENV5 which seeks to protect ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Conclusion

8. The proposal would provide new useable floorspace with suitable headroom to supplement the existing property, thus benefiting its occupants. It would be constructed to modern sustainability standards. It would improve the security of parked cars on the property, storing them out of sight, and would generate some additional economic activity for the local area. However, these material considerations are not sufficient to outweigh the findings in relation to the two main issues and the associated conflict with the development plan.
9. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR