
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 November 2021 by April Coombes

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/21/3284241

2 Ridgway, West Chinnock, Crewkerne TA18 7PY

- 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 Miss C Fry against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02370/HOU, dated 18 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing double garage, erection of replacement double garage and erection of timber fencing within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse (part-retrospective application).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. On the site visit it was observed that some timber fencing has been erected on the boundary with the public highway and therefore this element of the application was submitted retrospectively. Part of the appeal has therefore been considered on that basis. The description of the development in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice as it more accurately reflects the proposal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwellinghouse located in a residential part of West Chinnock village. It occupies a corner plot and is set within a circle of bungalows and houses, the rear gardens of which all face inwards, giving the area an open appearance to the front. The application seeks permission to demolish the single-storey double garage and erect a replacement double garage at the extreme corner of the plot. Part-retrospective permission is also sought for the timber fence at the front and side boundary of the curtilage.

6. Ridgway is characterised by open green corners that are free from built development. The area is predominantly characterised by a mix of hard and soft landscaping and an abundance of soft boundary treatments. Although the appellant has provided examples of properties that have replaced the front curtilage with hard landscaping it is not clear whether these benefit from planning permission.
7. The proposed garage would have a similar flat roof design to the existing garage. The relocation of the garage would allow for the retention of landscaping and utilise underused space at the side of the curtilage. However, the garage sited at the exposed extreme corner of the plot would appear unduly prominent. This would be exacerbated due to the appeal site occupying a particularly prominent corner, close to the entrance to the estate, compared to other properties situated further in.
8. Whilst many of the properties on Ridgway benefit from garages to the side of dwellings, no examples disrupt the building line in the same way as the proposed development, which would sit forward of the main dwelling. Therefore, due to its siting, which is exacerbated by its size, the proposed development would be an incongruous addition to the characteristically open street scene. It would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
9. The application also seeks permission for the erection of timber fencing, including areas to the front of the dwelling facing the public highway. Such a boundary treatment is not characteristic of the area, with many of the properties being open fronted or bounded by soft landscaping. The already constructed portion of the fence has a stark appearance that is emphasised by the slight incline on approach from Layne Terrace.
10. The current fence replaced a hedge that was of a species and age where problems were beginning to arise. The fence may be an improvement, in terms of road user visibility, and a reduction in bulk. However, it represents an incongruous addition to the wider street scene, despite efforts made by the appellant to implement a small degree of landscaping.
11. For the reasons given above the proposed development, inclusive of the already erected fencing, would be and is harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not and does not comply with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset District Council Local Plan (2006-2028), adopted 2015. Policy EQ2 requires development to achieve high quality design that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Other Matters

12. The development would result in benefits for the appellant, including play area for and the safety of children, pets and vehicles and the importance of the fence for a Christmas light display. These matters are largely private benefits, and it is unclear that the development is the most appropriate means to secure these. Therefore, these have very limited weight. There was support for the application from the Parish Council, neighbours and the appellant's local ward member. These comments have to be considered having regard to the wider planning considerations in this case and, in themselves only carry limited weight. Cumulatively, the above would not outweigh the harm that has been found in respect of character and appearance.

13. The appellant has raised procedural matters relating to the determination of the application. However, these are not central to the planning considerations that I can take into account for this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. The proposal would not accord with the development plan when taken as a whole. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Coombes

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR