



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2021

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/21/3282756

14 High Road, Wilmington DA2 7BN

- 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 Lucas Reynolds against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/20/01598/FUL, dated 15 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2021.
 - The development is for the proposed demolition and reformation of the existing ground floor extension to provide for a two storey extension, garage conversion to an annex including single storey front extension with raised patio to the rear with privacy screen which will be ancillary to the main home and the formation of a detached garage workshop.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site contains a detached dwelling set-back from High Road behind a large front garden. Properties on this side of the highway to the northeast of the site generally have a similar or greater set-back from the road. There are also numerous mature trees and hedges fronting the highway. The locality therefore has a spacious character and verdant appearance, and the set-back building line forms a positive characteristic of the area which is not notably disrupted by outbuildings or other such structures.
4. In the opposite direction on this side of High Road the centre of Wilmington is approached, and houses are closer to the highway with smaller front gardens. Being set on a prominent curve, the appeal site forms an important element within the street scene at the horizon where more substantial frontages meet the tighter-knit, urban peripherals of the village.
5. The proposed detached garage would be situated towards the front of the site, well forward of the host dwelling. I observed on my site visit that it would be clearly visible from both directions along High Road, and its substantial size and presence would be emphasised by its frontage location and the greater setback of the nearby properties to the northeast.

6. Consequently, the proposal would appear as an incongruous, intrusive and relatively dominant feature, which would erode the character and appearance of the surrounding area and disrupt the set-back context of the dwelling. In coming to this conclusion, I have taken account of the variety of built form in the locality and that the property is not situated in a conservation area, however these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
7. My attention has been drawn to other garages at the front of properties. The dwelling known as Pittsfield is considerably nearer to High Road than the appeal dwelling, and has a much closer relationship with its detached garage. 127 High Road has a modest single garage, once more in close proximity to the main house. Hawley Road and Birchwood Roads are some distance away and have a different character and appearance to this part of High Road. These examples are therefore not particularly comparable to the proposed development, and in any event each proposal should be dealt with on its own merits.
8. I am also aware that that landscaping could soften the building to a degree. However, given the unsympathetic siting and scale of the garage, the screening would need to be of a height and density that of itself would look unusual or out of place in the street scene.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to the Committee discussion prior to the determination of the application and I am mindful that he feels aggrieved by the decision. However, as the appeal is now before me, I have necessarily considered the proposal on its merits.
10. I note that the Council does not object to the other elements of the proposal, including the extension to the house or the conversion of the existing garage to an annex, and I have no reason to disagree.
11. I conclude that the detached garage would result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area. It would fail to accord with policies DP2 and DP7 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan July 2017, which require development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the Framework which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

12. Having regard to all the matters raised above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR