The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2021

by M. P. Howell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Wednesday 22 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/21/3282087
Alyeska, Sandhurst Road, Wokingham RG40 3JG

- 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 Abdul Mia against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
- The application Ref 211672, dated 13 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2021.
- The development proposed is for the erection of car port.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Sandhurst Road is a residential area designated as a Green Route. The southern section of the Road has woodland to both sides, but the woodland becomes less dense, and a more regular pattern of residential development is present towards the northern end. The dwellings are a mix of styles and sizes that either back onto or front the Road, but most are detached, maintain a notable set back with tall mature trees situated near to the boundary with the Road. The built form being set back from the Road coupled with the tall trees lining the Green Route provides a sense of space that positively contributes to the semi-rural character and appearance of the area.

4. Alyeska is a large, detached cotemporary dwelling, which predominately faces towards the Road. A set back is maintained from the road and a line of tall mature trees are planted near to the boundary wall. Three of the four trees, a Scots Pine and two Oaks are protected by a TPO[1]. Despite the setback and mature trees, the front has an open quality, and the dwelling is visible from localised views from the Road. The set back of the dwelling, line of trees and openness to the front, adds value to the sense of space and semi-rural character and appearance of the area.

5. A car port is proposed to the front of the site, with the rear elevation facing the Road. The car port would be a timber framed structure with a pitched roof, finished in tiles to match the host dwelling.

[1] Ref- TPO1115/2006- Set out in the Arboricultural Survey Impact Assessment by Land Arb Solutions (June 2021)

6. Although the proposed car port would have an open framed design, the scale, height, and solid design of the roof structure significantly adds to the bulk and massing of the proposal. The orientation and siting of the car port, together with the bulk and mass of the roof structure, would detract from the openness and sense of space currently enjoyed to the front of the property. This harm would be exacerbated by the prominence of the proposed car port from localised views to the north and south of the site on the Road. Consequently, the introduction of a car port of this scale and design, close to the Road, would be uncharacteristic of the built form, impacting upon the sense of space that positively contributes to the semi-rural character and appearance of the area.

7. Although there are examples of detached garages to the front of properties on the opposite side of the Road, due to the differences between these buildings and the proposal before me, in terms of their siting, design, proximity and orientation to the Road, they do not have the same impact. I also acknowledge that the trees to the front will remain, with minimal work required to accommodate the proposal. However, the height and coverage of the canopies of the trees would not adequately mitigate the visual impact of the proposal on the character and appearance identified above, especially when they are not in leaf.

8. I, therefore, conclude that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy 2010 and Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide 2012. These policies and guidance, in general, seek to ensure development is of a high quality of design that is appropriate to the character of the area, and integrates with its surroundings as well as maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment.

9. The Council also cite Policy CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Council Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014. This policy seeks to protect Green Routes, which the appeal site lies just outside of. Whilst the trees on the site make a contribution to the Green Route, although they are also not within it, the proposal would not adversely affect them. Consequently, I do not find that the proposal would conflict with Policy CC03.

Other Matters

10. I note that the appellant has put forward a fall-back position. It is indicated that a galvanised steel solid panelled car port, which would be attached to concrete pads on the floor, could be erected without planning permission. However, I do not have sufficient detail of this alternative to determine whether there is a real prospect of such a scheme being implemented were I to dismiss the appeal. Accordingly, I attribute this matter limited weight.

11. I acknowledge a representation from a neighbour supporting the proposal, however, the support shown does not outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and taking into account the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed**.**

M. P. Howell

INSPECTOR