

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2021

by David Spencer BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 4th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/21/3285944

9 Gunton Church Lane, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4LE

- 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 Tony Muttitt against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/3697/FUL, dated 2 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is front garage extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed garage extension on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal location is a residential area characterised by housing, including No.9 Gunton Church Lane, being set back from the highway by open areas comprising of front gardens and off-street parking. Accordingly, there is a relatively uniform front building line which reinforces a pleasant sense of spaciousness in the street scene in this part of Gunton Church Lane.
4. The appeal proposal would form a single storey extension at the front of No.9, parallel to where there is currently an opening for an integral single storey side garage to the host dwelling. The depth of the proposed garage extension would extend forward almost to the front boundary of the plot and would only be slightly set back from the footway so as to retain existing modest boundary landscaping. Whilst the proposal has sought to use a hipped roof to lower the height of the proposed extension closest to the highway the overall scale and massing of the extension would result in a bulky and conspicuous projection forward of the relatively uniform building line. This would result in a jarringly awkward visual effect, harmfully interrupting and eroding the otherwise open character at the front of dwellings in this part of Gunton Church Lane. Given the position of the appeal site close to the principal junction with Yarmouth Road, the harmful impact of the garage in the street scene would be highly conspicuous.
5. The appeal proposal would retain existing landscaping to the front of No.9 and this could be supplemented and allowed to grow over time. However, due to the proximity of the building to the footway I do not consider the limited width of landscaping directly adjacent to the proposed extension would be effective in

screening the bulk and forward depth of the proposed extension. The harmful loss of characteristic openness to the front of the dwelling would remain highly perceptible within the street scene.

6. The appellant refers to alterations to the front of No.7 Gunton Church Lane, but these are relatively modest and have retained the characteristic depth and openness of the front garden to the property. Given the contrast in terms of the extent of the proposed forward projection and scale of the proposed garage extension before me, these modest alterations at No.7 do not provide a precedent to support the appeal proposal.
7. I therefore conclude the appeal proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policy WLP8.29 of the East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan 2019 which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design and reflect local distinctiveness. This includes, amongst other things, responding to the local context and the form of surrounding buildings in terms of layout and the relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene. The proposal would also conflict with the fundamental objectives of the planning and development process to create high quality places and secure developments that add to the overall quality of an area, as set out at paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. I have taken into account all other matters raised, including the appellant's desire to provide a better level of covered parking provision and the lack of objection from neighbours and the Town Council, but nothing leads me to conclude other than the appeal should be dismissed for the reasons given.

David Spencer

Inspector.