



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2022

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 FEBRUARY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/D/21/3288493

Fairway, The Drive, Cheam, Sutton SM2 7DJ

- 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 Mark Coster against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application Ref: DM2021/01394 dated 2 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of a detached single storey garage with front boundary gate with brick piers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a detached single storey garage with front boundary gate with brick piers at Fairway, The Drive, Cheam, Sutton SM2 7DJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: DM2021/01394 dated 2 July 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan; Block Plan; FTD/GP/1; FTD/GE/1 and FTD/GP/2.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council amplified the description of development at the application stage to refer to *erection of a detached single storey garage with front boundary gate with brick piers*. This description has been used at the appeal stage and as it more fully and accurately describes the full extent of the proposed development, I have therefore also used it.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal relates to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and on the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached property on the south east side of The Drive, which is characterised by large houses of individual design set within generous plots. Although there are some exceptions, there is a predominant frontage treatment along The Drive of dense hedging with boundary gates to many of the properties. Some of the properties have integral garages or garages to the side but large detached garages to the front of properties are also a common feature, particularly to the more recently built houses along the road.
5. The proposed double garage would be sited in front of the house, towards the south-western boundary. It would be built in materials to match the existing property with a half hipped roof. There would be brick piers either side of the vehicular entrance with a sliding gate. There is an existing evergreen hedge which appears to have been recently planted along the frontage, either side of the vehicular entrance, with a grass verge extending to the road edge.
6. I have noted the guidance in the Council's SPD4 'Design of Residential Extensions' (SPD4), that the siting of large garages in front of houses should normally be avoided as they can over dominate the frontage of the plot. Given the size of the front garden area and the spacing between the house and the garage, as well as the detailed design with the half hipped roof and matching materials with the existing house, I do not consider that the proposed garage would be an over dominant feature in relation to the main house. It would be in keeping with the design style of the main dwelling and would appear as a subsidiary building, with adequate margins between the garage and the house and to the other boundaries, so that it would not appear cramped within the site.
7. The siting and general design, including the piers and gates, would follow the form of development which is already widely seen along The Drive and turning into Sandy Lane. The Council's reason for refusal refers to the harm to the street scene, both from the loss of the openness of the frontage and from the degree of enclosure, but it is my assessment that most of the frontages in the local area, particularly along The Drive are enclosed by dense hedging and gates and are therefore not open. The proposal would therefore, in my view, respect the existing pattern of development. The garage would present a flank wall towards the road edge, but this would be at least partially screened by the existing hedge which may become taller and more dense over time.
8. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed garage together with the proposed piers and gates would respect the character and appearance of the existing house and of the local area. There would be no conflict with Policy 28 of the Sutton Local Plan 2018 and SPD4 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and in particular Section 12, all of which amongst other things, seek a high quality of design which respects the local context.

Other Considerations

9. The Appellant has indicated that the property lies with The Burton Estates Area of Special Local Character (ASLC) although the Council has not specifically referred to this in its consideration or reason for refusal or referred to any specific policies in this regard. Moreover, I have already concluded that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the local area.

Conditions and Conclusion

10. The Council has proposed a number of conditions in the event of planning permission being granted. I agree that the materials should match the existing materials to protect the character and appearance of the existing building and the local area. A condition should be imposed to list the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR