



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2022

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/D/22/3291424
106 Funtley Road, Fareham, PO17 5EF

- 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 Paul MacDonald against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/21/1877/FP, dated 19 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is detached timber garage for use as ancillary storage for the existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached property located on the northern side of Funtley Road. The host property is set back from the road with its frontage, in part, forming a driveway and hardstanding area for parking. The frontage is enclosed by a boundary wall and wooden gate to the road, a tall hedge to the west on the boundary to No. 108 Funtley Road and a further boundary wall on its eastern side which abuts a footpath to the recreation area at the rear.
4. Whilst The Miners Public House to the west of the appeal site and some of the properties on the opposite (southern) side of Funtley Road are sited on or close to the road, most of the properties on the northern side of the road are, as with the host property, set back, with the level of separation greater to the east.
5. The appeal proposal seeks planning permission for a single storey detached timber garage which would be sited within the front hardstanding (garden) area. A timber garage has already been constructed in the same location and was the subject of a previous application for planning permission that was dismissed on appeal on 1 October 2021 (Ref. APP/A1720/D/21/3276769) (2021 Appeal). The current proposal has been submitted in response to that decision and shows a reduction of approximately 550mm in the height of the garage as constructed on site. This would be achieved by essentially replacing the existing gable ended design with a hipped roof. The footprint of the proposed garage would not change.

6. The 2021 Appeal Inspector found that the set back of the host property and other properties on the northern side of Funtley Road provided a sense of openness that contributed positively to the character of the area. Based on my observations on site this is a finding that I concur with. The previous Inspector also found that due to the modest size of the front garden (hardstanding) area and the fact that the garage was sited just behind the front boundary wall and extended close to the front elevation of the host property, the garage appeared excessively large, dominant and cramped, which was harmful to the open character of the streetscene.
7. As I confirmed above, no changes are proposed to the siting or footprint of the proposed garage. Consequently, the concerns raised by the 2021 Appeal Inspector in this respect have not been addressed. Based on my observations on site, I concur with the previous Inspectors findings and for the reasons given above find that the size of the front garden area is not sufficient to accommodate a garage of the size and footprint proposed. I am also satisfied that there is no new evidence before me that would lead me to reach a different finding in this respect.
8. The 2021 Appeal Inspector also found that the impact of the garage on the open character of the road was compounded by its height. As I confirmed above, in response the current appeal proposes to reduce the height of the garage by approximately 550mm. However, I agree with the Council that, even with this reduction in height, the proposed garage would still be highly visible over the existing boundary wall. As I observed on site and as is shown on the revised plans, part of the end elevation, the eaves and the hipped roof to the proposed garage would sit above and be visible above the existing boundary wall. Whilst I accept that the hedge on the western boundary would provide screening, its retention is not within the control of the Appellant. Even so, when approaching from Lakeside, opposite the appeal site and from the east on Funtley Road, the proposal would remain visually prominent and would continue to detract from the open character of this part of the streetscene.
9. In concluding on both issues the 2021 Appeal Inspector referred to the conflict that arose with the Fareham Borough Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (December 2015) (SPD). The latter states that garages or other buildings in front gardens will normally only be allowed where other similar buildings are already found. My attention has not been drawn to any comparable development on the northern side of the road, and on my site visit I found no evidence of any garages within a similar location, in this part of Funtley Road, to that proposed. The SPD goes on to state that gardens must also be large enough to accommodate such development. As I confirmed earlier, the frontage to the appeal site is clearly not large enough to accommodate the proposed garage.
10. The Appellant contends that the SPD is not policy or binding. However, the SPD has been adopted as a supplementary planning document to expand on the design guidance contained within the Fareham Borough Core Strategy (August 2011) (FBCS). As such and consistent with the policies, specifically paragraphs 130 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) the SPD should be accorded considerable weight. The SPD guidance remains, in this respect, broadly consistent with paragraphs 130 and 134, which, amongst other requirements, state that planning decisions should ensure that new development is sympathetic to local character including the surrounding

built environment and that where new development is not well designed it should be refused especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and supplementary planning documents such as design guides.

11. I accept that the proposed external materials to be used in the construction of the garage would be acceptable and contrast well with the mixture of materials found in the area. Even so, neither this nor the fact that the only representations received in response to the appealed application were letters of support affect the findings I have reached or outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that would result from the proposed garage.
12. Accordingly, I find that the proposed garage would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to policy CS17 of the FBCS. This policy seeks, amongst other requirements, to ensure that new development is of a high quality design and respects the key characteristics of the area including scale, form, spaciousness and built form. The appeal proposal would also conflict with the guidance in the SPD, which states that within front gardens garages will only be permitted where others already exist and the garden is large enough to accommodate the development, neither of which would apply here.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR