
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/D/22/3295002

The Coppice, 20 Stoughton Lane, Stoughton LE2 2FH

- 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 Jag Basra against the decision of Harborough District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01513/FUL, dated 16 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new garage and vehicular gates.
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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 local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached dwelling that was under construction at the time of the site visit. The completed dwelling will face Stoughton Lane, which in the vicinity of the site is a tree-lined road that is characterised mainly by a line of detached buildings of individual design set back from the highway mostly behind landscaped gardens and driveways. These features, coupled with roadside trees, a grass verge, and open fields on the north-east side of Stoughton Lane give the street scene and local area a spacious, semi-rural feel and a verdant character, which is distinctive.
4. The proposal includes a detached single storey building for use as a garage. It would be modest in height with cedar clad walls and a shallow pitched sedum roof. The new addition would be sited roughly midway between the finished dwelling and the highway. This arrangement would be at odds with most other properties along the same side of Stoughton Lane as The Coppice that include front gardens that are largely free of significant detached buildings.
5. I saw some variety to the front build line, boundary treatment and type of hard surface materials within the row of dwellings of which The Coppice forms part. However, it is the generally undeveloped gardens at the front of these properties that makes a significant and positive contribution to the pleasant spacious feel in the street scene and the local area. By introducing a substantial new built form, as proposed, that strong sense of openness would be unduly eroded. Having viewed the site from numerous vantage points along

Stoughton Lane, I am in little doubt that the proposed garage would appear as a visually disruptive and uncharacteristic intrusion into front garden space.

6. I note that the proposed external materials would match those of the main dwelling and that the garage door would be painted green. The position of the new garage near to existing and new planting would also, over time, screen and visually soften the proposal, as the appellant's artistic drawing shows. However, it is likely that the new addition would still be evident from vantage points near to the access and driveway serving The Coppice, and from the front of the properties on either side of the site. From these vantage points, the new garage would still draw the eye as a discordant element in the street scene even among the varied built form, boundary treatment and materials within it.
7. The appellant places some reliance on some properties along Stoughton Lane that include sizeable forward projections from the main house, most notably at Nos 16 and 38, or with detached frontage buildings, including Natural House and Parklands. From what I observed, these examples have blended into the visual character of the local area and respected the appearance and qualities of the site in question with varying degrees of success. These cases serve to illustrate that even modest encroachments into front garden space can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of that plot and the wider area. Having carefully considered each of the examples cited by the appellant, these do not justify an unsympathetic form of development, as sought.
8. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed garage would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy GD8 of the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031. This policy aims to ensure that development respects the context and character of the site, the street scene, and the local environment. It would fail to adhere to the guidance within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Development Management*, which states that garages/outbuildings in highly prominent locations in front of the building line will not be accepted. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.
9. The Council raises no objection to the proposed gates with black metal railings flanked by masonry pillars at the front of the main house. From the submitted evidence, I have no reason to disagree with that finding. However, it is unclear from the submitted plans and accompanying details, including the landscape and garden design whether this part of the scheme is clearly severable from the garage, which is objectionable. Consequently, I have not issued a split decision that grants planning permission solely for the new gates and pillars.
10. An Arboricultural Assessment (AA), dated August 2021, supports the appeal, although the appellant says that it was inadvertently omitted from the application submission. Had I been minded to allow this appeal then I would have sought comments on the AA from the Council and others and considered any representations made along with the document itself. However, as the appeal is to be dismissed on other grounds, I have not done so.
11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR