



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2022

By Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 MAY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/22/3292491

6 Carton Road, Higham, Gravesend, Kent ME3 7EB

- 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 Mandeep Walia against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20211358, dated 27 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of a detached garage/office to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The Character and appearance of the of the local area with reference to streetscene; and
 - The effective use and safety of the highway.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the description of the development varies between the documents submitted for the purposes of this appeal, I have used the description from the Council's decision notice, as this more accurately describes the development and has been used by both parties in the material submitted for this appeal.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a relatively large plot with a post-war detached hipped roof bungalow set well back from the street. It sits in a run of similar properties, many of which, including the appeal property, appear to have undergone significant alteration and additions. It is located in the middle of Carton Road, which is a no-through road with a dead-end and is fronted by a mixture of bungalows and some 2 storey houses.
5. The proposal is for a detached shallow pitched roof single storey 6.4m by 5.4m building, in materials to match the main dwelling, which would sit towards the

front of the appeal site, providing for garage/office space. The proposal would sit with a gable end facing the street, which would be approximately 3.3 metres to its apex. This would be set back from the street at the front end by 1.3 metres and 1.5 metres at its rear. A vehicular garage door would open onto the existing extensively paved front drive, allowing for vehicle parking parallel to the street. A separate standard access door and a window would face towards the bungalow on the site. The appellant does not provide details of the division of space between garage and office use.

6. The bungalow on the appeal site and its neighbours are set well back from the street. As the proposed building would be located towards the frontage of the appeal site, it would appear as significantly separated from the existing bungalow and would appear as a stand-alone structure. This would, when viewed from the street and neighbouring gardens, appear to sit in front of not only the bungalow on the site but would also appear to sit in front of the run of setback bungalows.
7. From my site visit, it is clear that Carton Road has properties with extensive garages forward of the main dwellings on their sites. However, these are set back significantly from the street frontage and are located adjacent to the main dwelling. This results in them appearing to be directly related to and integrated with the main dwellings and other structures on their sites.
8. Due to the scale of the proposal, its location at the front of the site and the separating distance to the bungalow, the proposal would appear prominently in street views, interrupting the established pattern of the setback run of bungalows and the established building line and street frontage. The proposal does not, therefore, accord with the guidance given in the Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021), which states that garages should not be located in a position which would detract from the attractiveness of the street scene. Rather, the proposal would appear as dominating and incongruous and therefore detrimental to the streetscene.
9. Whilst the appellant has brought to my attention other detached garages to the front of residential properties in the local area, including Carton Road, the individual circumstances of these, including those detailed in the planning approvals provided to me, differ from that of the appeal site and proposal. These would have been determined on their own merits, and I have, likewise, done the same with the appeal proposal and I have, therefore, given these little weight in my considerations.
10. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. This would conflict with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) (the CS) and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), which collectively seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, integrates with the local area and make a positive contribution to the street scene.

Highway use and safety

11. Carton Road is a no through road, with no dedicated footways, just grass verge with vehicular crossovers. The street is relatively narrow, with shrubbery and hedging from front gardens reaching across the verge, making it appear even narrower.

12. Based on my observations during the site visit, I find that this results in an existing highway environment where pedestrians and vehicles are sharing the use of the carriageway. As the street is a relatively short no through road, the volume of traffic appears to be minimal and does not currently give the appearance of being hazardous or experienced as unsafe by pedestrian users.
13. Vehicular highway access to the appeal site would continue to be by the existing gated access at this point. However, the proposal would be located directly adjacent to these gates and its garage door end would be 1.3m from the boundary of the appeal site with the highway. This, along with its width and lack of a visibility splay, would significantly encroach on the driver's view of vehicles and pedestrians in the carriageway, when vehicles are exiting both the appeal property and the neighbouring property at 8 Carlton Road.
14. Notwithstanding that the street has limited vehicular and pedestrian usage, this encroachment would, due to the reduction in visibility of pedestrians and vehicles in the carriageway, result in significant detriment to the safety of pedestrians and vehicles using this carriageway.
15. Whilst there are areas of hedging adjacent to the highway in parts of the street, these do not have the depth of the proposed garage/office and do not interfere with driver visibility to the degree that would result from the proposal.
16. Whilst the proposed garage/office would be slightly shallower than that set out in the adopted Kent County Council Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance (2006). The proposed garage would not necessarily be used for parking cars and would not be necessary to provide the required parking provision on the site. I find therefore that saved policy P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review allows for such an exception and the proposal would comply with this policy.
17. For the above reasons the proposal would, however, result in significant harm to highway safety and would, therefore, conflict with policy CS11 of the CS that seeks to ensure that development mitigates its impact on the highway.

Conclusion

18. The development is in conflict with the development plan. Accordingly, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR