



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2018

by Megan Thomas Barrister-at-Law

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

Decision date: 5th March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/18/3216206

5 Worsenden, Sissinghurst Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8EH

- 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 Alex Dean against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref.18/00939/AS, dated 18 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2018.
 - The development is a detached single garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development which is the subject of the appeal has already taken place. I have treated the appeal as one for retrospective development. The Council do not assert that there was an intention to deliberately erect the garage without a requisite planning permission. The fact that the appeal is for retrospective development has not affected the determination I have made concerning the merits of the application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two storey semi-detached dwelling near the village of Biddenden. It is accessed off Sissinghurst Road, a main road running through the village. It is situated on the northern side of the road and it's semi-pair is no.6 Worsenden. It is one of 8 dwellings arranged in a broadly semi-circular pattern which are all generously set back from the road. It is in a broadly central location in the crescent of dwellings. The site has a vehicle crossover and a gravelled parking area in front of the dwelling.
5. The garage for which permission is sought is single with a pitched roof. The lower part of the building is constructed of brick with the upper elevations clad in dark-painted timber. It occupies a footprint of about 4m by about 6.8m with a ridge height of about 3.7m and due to the topography of the site it is partly set down within the ground towards the road end of the building. It is partially screened by planting.

6. The Council has Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG9 *"Domestic Garages and Outbuildings in Urban and Rural Areas"* which has been subject to public consultation. The SPG states that wherever possible garages should be set back behind the front building line to avoid unnecessary predominance in the street scene if that is the prevailing pattern of development in the locality. The SPG further states that in rural areas, the building line will be less of an issue, although proposals should still not be overly prominent or intrusive. The guidance goes on to say that in considering a suitable location for outbuildings these should be close to the existing dwelling to limit overall impact of building work within the landscape and that garages and outbuildings that are located forward of any clear and visually obvious "building line" will not normally be acceptable if they disrupt a strong and established building line.
7. The prevailing character of Sissinghurst Road consists of properties with open frontages and long front gardens with mainly hedge or tree screening. Whilst the garage has been set down slightly, presents its flank to the road and is made of materials sympathetic to the area, it is very close to the road and interrupts the attractive semi-circular pattern of similarly-designed dwellings. The garage is in a prominent location for these reasons.
8. In my view, there is visual harm in locating the garage in front of the crescent of 8 dwellings. Whilst the area is not a designated conservation area, the configuration of dwellings is attractive, consistent and balanced. On my site visit, I noted that the garage interrupts public views from the south and when travelling in an easterly or westerly direction along Sissinghurst Road. In spite of its size and materials it appears visually intrusive and undermines the open nature of the immediate locality.
9. In coming to this view, I have considered other garages in the area and the planning permission for a car port at nearby Swallows House. I assessed these factors on my site visit. However, these do not override the harm I have identified from the garage in this particular location.
10. Overall, therefore, I conclude that the garage unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the area and is contrary to policies CS1 and CS9 of the Ashford Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2008), policy TRS17 of the Tenterden & Rural Sites Development Plan Document (adopted 2010) and to SPG9 (2004).
11. Having taken into account all representations made, for the reasons given above, I dismiss the appeal.

Megan Thomas

INSPECTOR