

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2022

by Jane Smith MA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3271759
114 Well Hall Road, Eltham SE9 6SL

- 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 M Wisniewski against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 20/3075/HD, dated 8 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "construction of a new garage in front garden".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The decision notice describes the proposed development as "construction of a new garage in front garden and other associated external alterations". The plans show that the roof of the proposed garage would provide a patio with balustrade and planting. I have taken account of these associated external alterations when considering the appeal.
3. I am aware from other casework that, since the application was determined, the 2016 London Plan has been superseded by the London Plan adopted in March 2021. Therefore the 2016 London Plan policies referred to in the reason for refusal are no longer relevant and consequently in reaching my decision I have not had regard to them.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located in a residential section of Well Hall Road, where houses of similar appearance are set back a consistent distance from the road, behind upward sloping front gardens. The elevated position of the houses relative to the road is a distinctive feature of the street scene.
6. Front gardens are generally terraced or banked, mostly with low retaining walls to the front boundary. Some have been excavated to provide areas of hard standing. There are a few existing garages, but these are in the minority. There

is a variety of front garden planting which, together with an avenue of street trees, gives this section of Well Hall Road a leafy character.

7. The proposed garage would replace the terraced front garden with an angular structure occupying most of the width of the appeal site. Its front wall would abut the back edge of the pavement and would be considerably higher than is typical of existing front boundary features. This would result in a bulky structure, significantly increasing building mass along the front boundary. The garage would be an excessively dominant feature in a prominent position on the appeal site. It would disrupt the established relationship between houses and their front gardens along this section of the road, to a degree that would be harmful to its character and appearance.
8. My attention has been drawn to four existing garages nearby. I observed on site that none are directly comparable to the proposed development, having a number of differences in terms of their scale, their position in relation to the front boundary and the approach to hard and soft landscaping. I therefore afford these other examples limited weight. In any event, houses with front garages are in the minority and are not typical of the overall street scene. Therefore, the presence of these other garages does not change my view of the harm which would arise from this proposed development.
9. Although the appellant highlights the intended use of high-quality exterior finish materials, matching neighbouring properties, this would not overcome the harm arising from the garage's scale and location.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. As such, it is contrary to Policy DH(a) and DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies adopted July 2014. These policies require development, among other things, to be of a high quality of design, limited to a scale and design appropriate to the locality.
11. The proposed development is also contrary to relevant guidance in the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2018, which states that outbuildings should be in proportion to the original house and garden and should not impact upon the open character of the surrounding area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole, along with all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jane Smith

INSPECTOR