



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2022 by Ms S Maur

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/22/3291905

Site Address: 28 Wargrave Road, Twyford RG10 9PQ

- 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 B Rawson against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 213807, dated 18 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The character of the area is predominantly residential and although there is some variation in the building line, primarily the area is spacious with dwellings set well back from the pavement and highway. Boundary treatments that face the road are low or made of soft landscaping giving a verdant character and sense of space between the road and buildings. Domestic garages are mostly set back behind the main dwellings or integrated within the overall design of the house.
5. The appeal dwelling has two storeys, detached and sits within a large rectangular plot. The host property has had extensions added to the front and rear of the dwelling and has had planning permission to be modernised and extended¹ in 2021. There is an existing projecting garage toward the northwest of the site. The dwelling is accessed via a shared driveway with 30 Wargrave Road and parking is in the front of the property and behind high dense shrubbery on the southern and western boundaries, which screens the site. The property therefore contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

¹ LPA ref: 221510

6. The proposal involves the erection of a detached double garage with a low, pitched roof, made of brick and stone cladding. The garage would be located towards the southwest of the property, in close proximity to the highway and the boundary next to 6 Thornbury Green. A portion of shrubbery would be removed to accommodate the garage and the planting to the front and side would be retained.
7. The proposed garage, even though small scale with a pitched and low roof profile and subservient to No 28, would be sited significantly forward of the host property, contrary to the established layout and character of the local area. This would conflict with advice set out in the Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012 (SPD) which indicates that garages should not be sited in front gardens, but should be to the side or rear of a dwelling. Whilst this is only guidance, in this instance the lack of other structures significantly forward of the dwellings, in the immediate area, reinforces my view that a building in this position would be out of keeping with the character of the area.
8. Although some planting would be lost, there would be sufficient retained to ensure the verdant character and appearance of the area would be maintained. Therefore, in itself, the removal of some planting would not be harmful and there would be no conflict with Policy CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan (2014), which seeks to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
9. The remaining planting would give some screening to the proposed garage, it would still be visible from neighbouring properties. Furthermore, even if a condition could adequately protect the retained planting during construction in accordance with the relevant British Standard, there is no mechanism suggested which would secure the planting in the long term (for the entire lifetime of the development). Landscaping of this nature will have a natural end to its lifetime and is therefore not likely to remain in situ indefinitely.
10. Whilst conditions can secure the retention of the landscaping element, typically, it would be for a time limited period, as it would not be reasonable to secure landscaping in perpetuity. In the event that the landscaping was not present, which could be the position in the longer term, the garage would be very visible, harming the appearance of the area as well as its character.
11. The appellant has supplied examples of garages which he considers are similar to that before me now, including three granted at appeal. However, these relate to a different context, where in some cases, the character of the various areas are not generally as free from structures well to the front of the dwellings. These examples are also not located within the immediate surroundings of this appeal site and so are not seen together with it. In any event, each case must be considered on its own merits.
12. There have been no neighbour objections and the proposal would not cause harm to highway safety. However, these are neutral matters and they do not mitigate or outweigh the effect this proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area.
13. For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, surrounding area and

street scene. The proposal would be in conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan (2010). This seeks to ensure that development is of an appropriate layout, built form and character, that contributes to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (including existing dwellings). There would also be no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to achieve good design.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ms S Maur

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR