



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2022

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/22/3300793

Ravels, Shootersway Lane, Berkhamsted, HP4 3NW

- 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 & Mrs Nick Lavery against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00635/FHA, dated 24 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is conversion of garage to form two storey structure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling, with a detached double garage in its front garden. It is located on a corner plot at the junction of Shootersway and Shootersway Lane.
4. The proposal is to enlarge the footprint of the existing garage, such that it would be closer to the front boundary of the site with Shootersway Lane. The garage would be redesigned with a first floor, flat roofed addition which would be irregular in shape and would overhang part of the ground floor footprint.
5. The surrounding area mainly comprises of large dwellings set within generous, landscaped plots. There are examples of garages to the front of the dwellings although from what I could see at my site visit, most of these are single storey or have a limited first floor set within the roof space.
6. The existing double garage to the front of Ravels is of a dual pitch roof design and is in keeping with the design and appearance of the host dwelling. There is a garage of a similar appearance to the front of the neighbouring property where a new house is under construction.
7. The appeal proposal would result in a full two storey structure to the front of the host dwelling. The height of the resultant building would be about the same as the eaves height of the existing dwelling. The dominance of the building would be emphasised by the irregular shaped overhanging first floor addition

which in my view, would result in an overtly 'top heavy' appearance. The building would not appear sufficiently subordinate to the existing dwelling and would fail to harmonise with it. Consequently, I find that the proposed building would dominate the frontage of the site to an unacceptable extent and would visually compete with the host dwelling due to its overall size, scale, height and design.

8. Whilst there is screening along the boundaries of the site with Shootersway and Shootersway Lane, the existing garage is nonetheless clearly visible in both street scenes. In my view, the proposed two storey, flat roof building to the front of the host dwelling would stand out as an uncharacteristic form of development, and due to its prominent siting and its overall size, scale, height, design and materials, would be incongruous and harmful to local character.
9. The appellant has highlighted other examples of buildings in the local area including garages to the front of dwellings, buildings that are on or close to the boundaries of the plot and also examples of developments with modern materials. Whilst I have had regard to these examples, none appear to be of directly compatible or of particular relevance to the appeal proposal which is for a two-storey flat roof structure to the front of the host property.
10. The appellant has also referred to a planning permission¹ that has been granted on the adjacent site (Rosewood). Whilst at my site visit I noted that a house was under construction, I have not been provided with any further details regarding its siting or design that would enable me to make a meaningful comparison with the appeal proposal.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It conflicts with Policies CS11 and CS12 of Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy 2006-2031 (2013) as well as Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (1991). These policies seek to ensure that development integrates with the streetscape character, harmonises with the original design and character of the house; and respects adjoining properties in terms of layout, scale, height, bulk and materials. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) insofar as it states that developments should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR

¹ Planning application reference 21/01947/FUL