

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2022

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/22/3298655

Windy Ridge, Wallop Road, Grateley, Hampshire SP11 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 Graham Inchley against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00330/FULLN, dated 8 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is a triple garage and shed (retrospective).
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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 this part of Wallop Road.

Reasons

3. Windy Ridge is a detached bungalow sitting well back from the street on rising ground, within a line of similar properties on the rural fringe of the village of Grateley. It has an extensive front garden in which there are several outbuildings, 2 of which are the subject of the (retrospective) appeal application. The Council raises no objection to the small shed. Its objection is to the timber triple garage. The garage and shed were both in place at the time of my site visit.
4. The garage is a sizeable structure, set well up above street level and forward of Windy Ridge. Its long back wall is prominent in views from Wallop Road, as seen from the north-west, across the more open front gardens of neighbouring properties where it intrudes on the spacious and verdant character of this part of the row. It sits in the foreground of views of Windy Ridge and the bungalows further to the south-east as a dominant visual feature. Although those bungalows to the south-east are set forward of Windy Ridge, and there is a much smaller and lower garage in the front garden next door, this does not adequately justify the siting of such a sizeable outbuilding in an elevated position forward of the row of bungalows.

5. Views of the garage from the south-eastern approach and opposite the site are screened by the property's frontage evergreen hedging. The garage could, however, become much more visible in future if that evergreen hedging were ever to be removed. I note that this hedging could be replaced if required and new planting could be introduced in the gap between the triple garage and the side boundary. The walls of the garage could be stained a dark colour as suggested by the appellant. None of these actions would, however, sufficiently mitigate what I consider to be poorly sited development that intrudes onto the more open character of these frontages.
6. The Council is also concerned about the use of timber here, but that material is used for other outbuildings nearby and I find no objection in this respect. Nevertheless, I conclude that the proposed garage causes unacceptable harm to the spacious, rural character and appearance of this part of Wallop Road. It therefore conflicts with the aims of Policies E1 and E2 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan, to ensure development is of high quality in terms of design and local distinctiveness and does not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area.
7. The appellant intends to site solar panels on the garage, which would make a small but valuable contribution towards addressing climate change. I understand that there have been thefts at the property and the garage provides secure storage. I also understand that the garage has been sited to provide easy access for elderly relatives living at Windy Ridge. I note that the Parish Council and neighbours have not objected to the application. These points are all significant, but are not sufficient to override my clear objections in respect of the main issue.
8. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR