



---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2022

**by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 1st December 2022**

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/22/3298569**

**Three Gables, 40 Keswick Road, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, KT23 4BH**

- 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 Mrs Fiona McGann against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
  - The application Ref MO/2021/2254/PLAH, dated 21 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2022.
  - The development proposed is described as the erection of detached garage.
- 

### 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 street scene and the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in an area that is described in the council's Built up Areas Character Appraisal – Bookham and Fetcham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as being characterised by medium to low density housing. Buildings are often set back from the highway, with mature trees and garden landscaping dominating the street scene.
4. Consistent with this, Keswick Road is primarily characterised by detached two storey family houses which occupy generous sized and mature landscaped sized plots. The dwellings are set back from the street behind spacious front gardens that are enclosed by a combination of hedges, low walls and fences. These gardens together with the grass verges and trees within the highway contribute to the spacious and sylvan character and appearance of the street scene and the area.
5. Whilst a considerable number of dwellings in Keswick Road have integral or attached garages, very few properties have free-standing garages within their front gardens. The few free standing garages I saw during my site visit have blended into the street scene with varying degrees of success. Those located in large front gardens, sited close to the host dwellings and constructed from matching materials were most successful. They are seen against and generally respect the character and appearance of the host dwellings and retain the spacious, soft landscaped appearance of the plots.

6. The appeal dwelling is located within a row of dwellings with broadly consistent front building lines. Whilst none of the dwellings have detached garages in their front gardens, one has an integral garage that projects forward of the main front building line. Similarly, a number of dwellings on the opposite side of the road have integral garages that project forward of the main front building line.
7. The appeal dwelling comprises a detached two storey chalet style family dwelling which occupies a generous sized plot. One side of the garden is used for vehicle access and parking and the other is laid to lawn. The front garden is enclosed by a combination of various species of hedging plants. This includes a mature evergreen hedge along the boundary with No. 38 and partially along the front boundary of the property. To the front of the property is a narrow grass verge and a mature tree.
8. Together and amongst other things Mole Valley Local Plan (LP) Policies ENV22, ENV23 & ENV24 seek to ensure that new development respects the character and appearance of the locality, taking account of its scale, form, height, bulk, appearance, materials and general space around buildings, in relation to the site and the surrounding built environment. The Mole Valley Core Strategy (CS) Policy CS14 requires new development to respect and enhance the character of the area, whilst making best possible use of the land available. Policy BKEN2 of the Bookham Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) is consistent with this.
9. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (Framework), similarly states that new development should be sympathetic to local character, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and add to the overall quality of the area, whilst optimising the potential of the site.
10. The council's Design Guidance for House Extensions (DG), advises that garages are utility structures which should not dominate the host dwelling. They should be designed to be sympathetic to the host dwelling, with a similar pitched roof and are usually better set back from the face of the existing house. This is so that their prominence does not detract from the character and setting of the house.
11. The proposed garage would occupy a central and prominent position within the north-eastern side of the front garden, some 4.1 metres from the front elevation of the dwelling. It would project very close to the existing side boundary hedge and the resultant garden area between the garage and the front boundary would be uncharacteristically shallow.
12. Whilst the appearance of the proposed garage would not be unusual for a domestic outbuilding, its roof design and timber clad walls would not reflect the design of the roof of the host dwelling, or its external materials. This would add to the prominence of the garage when viewed from the immediate street scene. Although the proposed garage would be largely screened from wider views within the street scene, its roof would be visible above the boundary hedging, where it would be visually distinct from the host dwelling and would dominate the front garden.
13. As a consequence of these factors, the resultant development would appear fragmented and cramped. It would materially detract from the spacious and

sylvan character and appearance of the street scene and the area. This harm would outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the provision of a garage in this location on the site. It is not something that could be satisfactorily dealt with by condition.

14. The appellant has referred to a number of existing extensions and garages in the locality, which I viewed during my site visit. None of these examples are directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Rather than set a precedent they highlight the importance of assessing each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
15. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the street scene and the area. Accordingly, it would conflict with LP Policies ENV22, ENV23 & ENV24, CS Policy CS14 and paragraph 130 of the Framework.

*Elizabeth Lawrence*

INSPECTOR