



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2022

by J Wellstead BA(Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3306626

46 Nascot Wood Road, Hertfordshire, Watford, WD17 4SL

- 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 HH against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00587/FULH, dated 3 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has advised that the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 (WLP) was adopted on 17 October 2022 and replaces the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the garage upon the character and appearance of the area, including protected trees.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is located on a prominent corner plot position next to the junction of Nascot Wood Road and Tunnel Wood Road and is within an existing suburban residential area. It currently functions as a front garden with a drive and car parking to its host property 46 Nascot Wood Road (No 46) which is a two-storey detached house. The site is bounded by a number of trees, adjacent neighbouring properties, Nascot Wood Road and Tunnel Wood Road.
5. The existing character and appearance of the residential properties in the surrounding area is of predominantly similar-sized dwellings that are set back from the road behind front gardens and driveways. The majority of houses along Nascot Wood Road have garages that are integral or adjacent to the main dwelling with driveways and front gardens which give an open and verdant character and appearance. The appeal site occupies a large corner plot and therefore makes a particularly significant contribution to the character of the area.
6. The proposed garage would sit forward of the building line in front of the host property and therefore appear unduly dominant in the street scene and erode

the openness of the area. This harm would be exacerbated by the prominent corner plot location.

7. The proposed garage would be positioned in close proximity to the shared boundary of No 48 and near three protected trees. The garage would occupy a large area of the front garden of No 46 and even with a pitched roof and materials to match the host property, the size and height of the garage along with its position close to the public highway would combine to make the garage unduly prominent and visually intrusive in the street scene that is predominantly characterised by the open nature of the front gardens. The appellant has offered to introduce further landscaping between the garage and front boundary to soften the appearance of the development from the public domain, but this would take time to establish and in the interim the garage would be prominent and visible.
8. The pattern of development along Nascot Wood Road is predominantly consistent and uniform in appearance. The appellant has raised to my attention a section of housing between Ridge Lane and Tunnel Wood Road, on the North-east side of Nascot Wood Road. This section of the street scene is more varied in layout to that of the rest of Nascot Wood Road. However, this is a separate and small portion of Nascot Wood Road, and No 46 continues the predominant building line that exists on the north-east side of Nascot Wood Road.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples of properties on the south-western side of Nascot Wood Road with detached garages. These detached garages benefit from being screened by well-established trees and landscaping. On the whole, they are also not as prominently located as No 46 in its corner plot location. Although No 67 occupies a large corner plot, its detached garage is located behind dense, well-established trees and landscaping that mitigates visible impact on the street scene. Given these differences, the presence of these garages does not justify the appeal scheme.
10. The appellant has also provided examples of properties on the north-eastern side of Nascot Wood Road that have detached garages or buildings adjacent to Nascot Wood Road. There are two existing detached garages at No 50, one of which is situated in close proximity to and visible from Nascot Wood Road while the other is more set back and screened by trees and soft landscaping. I am not persuaded in the context of the character and appearance of the host building and area that the existing garages at No 50 represent a particularly characteristic, desirable or positive precedent and form of development to follow. Given these differences, the presence of these garages does justify approving the appeal scheme.
11. The Officer's report indicates that the trees within the neighbouring garden of No 48 stand within close proximity to the proposed garage, so the development could necessitate works within the root protection areas of the trees. Having regard to these works, it cannot be assumed, nor has it been demonstrated that the long-term health and vitality of the trees would be ensured following the construction of the garage, even with the use of piling foundations suggested by the appellant. Nascot Wood Road benefits from being lined on both sides by a large number of mature trees that add to the green character and feel of the area. The proposed garage could cause harm to the trees that add to the distinct character and appearance of the area.

12. For these reasons, the proposed garage would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area, and the nature of the proposal is such that I am not convinced that the suggested conditions would mitigate this substantial harm. As such, the proposal would fail to accord with Policies QD6.2, QD6.4, NE9.1 and NE9.2 of the Watford Borough Council Local Plan 2021-2038, and inconsistent with policies of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks well-designed places and retaining existing trees wherever possible.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole, and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Thus, the appeal is dismissed.

J Wellstead

INSPECTOR

