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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2022

**by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 9 December 2022**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/D/22/3298971**

**48 Northdown Road, Broadstairs CT10 2UW**

- 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 Miss Kim Spindler against the decision of Thanet District Council
  - The application FH/TH/22/0175, dated 7 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 April 2022.
  - The development is the retention of a single storey lower level freestanding carport to front.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are: the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, and whether the carport would obstruct pedestrian visibility.

### Procedural Matter

3. Although the application was described as 'the erection of a single storey lower level freestanding carport to the front' on the application form, it had largely been completed at the time of my site visit. I have therefore adjusted the description of development to reflect the circumstances I found on site.

### Reasons

4. The application property comprises a semi-detached house located on the western side of Northdown Road. It is one of similar semi-detached houses on this side of the road, which are all slightly elevated above road level. Most of the front gardens are being used for car parking and because of the level differences there are varying degrees of excavation or ramped areas to accommodate the parking.
5. The development is largely completed and comprises a corrugated structure with a curved roof, partially enclosed at the sides and extending from the back edge of the footpath rearwards into the site. The appellant advises that it is intended to add some white boarding and landscaping to improve its visual appearance. The purpose of the car port is to accommodate a classic car which was parked at the time of my site visit.

6. The appellant argues that because of its slightly excavated siting and high front boundary fences to either side of the property, the carport is not prominent in the wider streetscene. Whilst I observed that is the case when looking directly along the footpath or from distant approaches in either direction, as one approaches the site and particularly from directly opposite, it is clearly visible. In that respect, I agree with the Council that because of its bulk and front garden location it appears as an intrusive and unsightly feature. This is compounded by the unsuitability of the corrugated sheeting which is at odds with the predominant brick and tile appearance of the nearby properties. The addition of white boarding and landscaping would mitigate the appearance to some extent but not the fundamental issue about the unsuitability of the front garden location for such a sizeable structure and the poor choice of materials. Such mitigation would therefore not overcome the visual harm that has been caused.
7. I acknowledge that the removal of the carport would still mean a parked vehicle on the front garden area, but that would not cause the same degree of visual harm that the bulkier structure of the carport does. I also acknowledge that there have been no local objections to the carport. However, that in itself does not make a development acceptable particularly where there is wider public harm as is the case here. Finally, whilst I am sympathetic to the need to provide protection for the classic vehicle, personal circumstances change over time whereas a permanent structure does not.
8. With regard to the potential impact on pedestrian visibility, I note that the normal requirements cannot be achieved. However, pedestrian visibility is already obstructed by the high boundary fences and retaining walls to either side of the property and in this instance, I do not consider that the carport has made that situation materially worse which would justify a refusal of permission in its own right.
9. For the above reasons the carport has harmed the character and appearance of the area. It is therefore contrary to Policy SP35 and QD02 of the 2020 Thanet District Council Local Plan, and Policy BSP9 of the Broadstairs and St. Peter's Neighbourhood Plan, in that it is not well designed, does not relate well to surrounding development and does not reinforce local character.
10. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

*Kim Bennett*

INSPECTOR