



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 January 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/22/3305215

24 Rectory Drive, Wootton, Isle of Wight, PO33 4QE

- 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 C Duff against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/00934/HOU, dated 24 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2022.
 - The development is proposed porch extension to form study; extension to garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the northern side of Rectory Drive and comprises a single storey detached bungalow with gardens to the front and rear and a detached single storey flat roofed garage to the side. It forms part of an estate of similar style detached bungalows. Rectory Road itself slopes down from west to east and where the road splits, to the east of the appeal site, at the junction with Bridgeway, there is a communal green. As a consequence, the appeal site is located in a prominent and highly visible part of the estate.
4. Whilst some properties in Rectory Drive have been altered, the scale of change that has occurred is very modest. Most of the frontages to the properties within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site retain a consistent and simple appearance through their original design, which combined with the open nature of their front gardens is a positive characteristic of this part of the estate. This character is enhanced by the gaps that exist between the properties, often filled with low level landscaping, which combined with the open frontages give a feeling of openness and spaciousness.
5. The appeal proposal involves a porch extension, which the Council have not objected to as they consider its design and siting to be subordinate, thus not detracting from the character or appearance of the host property. I concur with the Council's findings in this respect. The Council do object to the proposed extension to the existing single storey garage. The latter involves extending the garage towards the common boundary with 22 Rectory Drive (No.22) and essentially doubling its footprint and scale.

6. Within the above context, I consider that the scale, extent and footprint of the garage, as extended, would be excessive. The proposed garage extension would not be sympathetic to or in proportion to the host property or adjacent properties. As I observed on site, there are no examples of properties in this part of the streetscene where existing garages have been extended on such a scale as proposed, and it would introduce, therefore, a prominent feature that would appear out of keeping with the host property and surrounding area. This impact would be compounded by the proposed pallet of materials that include weatherboard cladding and a large panelled garage door, compared to the existing pallet, largely repeated on other garages on this side of the road, of narrow buff coloured brick piers and a small horizontally slatted garage door.
7. The proposed extension would also fill in most of the gap that currently exists between the garage and the common boundary with No.22, leading to the loss of low level landscaping on this boundary. Both contribute to the openness and spaciousness of this part of the estate and soften the transition between neighbouring properties. This loss would, therefore, be harmful to those features that make a contribution to the character of the area.
8. Whilst I do not agree with the Council's reference to 'overdevelopment', which implies a much larger scale of development and site coverage, I am satisfied, on balance, that the proposed garage extension would visually dominate the streetscene and result in a development that fails to integrate with or relate well to the existing rhythm of built development.
9. The Appellant has referred to the fact that there have been no objections from interested parties and that the Parish Council's comments resulted from a misunderstanding in that they assumed the proposal included a roof terrace, which was in fact part of a previous scheme. However, the absence of any objections does not in any way imply that the proposal is acceptable or take away the need for it to be properly assessed in terms of its impact on the host property and surrounding area.
10. The Appellant has also referred to what they contend are similar garages or garage extensions and have provided photographs of these in their Grounds of Appeal. As there are no references on the photographs it is difficult to ascertain where these examples are, albeit a number relate to two storey properties which form a different part of the estate layout. Even so, I accept that there are examples of flat roofed garages sited next to each other elsewhere, but these are not, in my view, comparable in that: they appear to have been originally designed in that form; they can still be distinguished as individual garages; they form part of the estate where neighbouring properties garages were designed to sit next to each other; and they do not form part of the local context to the appeal site.
11. Furthermore, in assessing the examples referred to by the Appellant it is important to reemphasise the well-established principle that all applications must be considered on their individual merits having regard, in particular, to the local circumstances of the case. The latter is the approach I have adopted in determining this appeal and consequently none of these examples affect my overall findings.
12. Accordingly, I find that the proposed garage extension would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area and would thus fail to comply with policy DM2 of the Island

Plan Core Strategy & Development Management Development Plan Document (March 2012). This policy requires, in optimising a sites development, that regard be had to existing constraints such as adjoining buildings, views, landscaping and other features that contribute to the character of an area and to encouraging development that integrates well with its surroundings. This policy is consistent with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (Framework) where it requires new development to add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and having taken all the matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR