



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2023

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/22/3313267

Shalon, Reading Road, Hook RG27 9EA

- 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 & Mrs Nicholas Knight against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01711/HOU, dated 1 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single garage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Shalon is located within a row of dwellings on the eastern side of Reading Road. The mixture of detached bungalows and chalet bungalows are set some distance back from the road. Most utilise the front garden for parking, however other than the boundary wall or fencing the frontages are free from development and this stretch of the road with trees to the other side has a relatively verdant appearance.
4. The proposal would introduce a detached garage adjacent to the front boundary, orientated with the door facing towards the dwelling. The structure would be a dominant feature extending some distance above the boundary wall and into the site. While existing vegetation would provide some screening it would be a notable intrusion in views along this part of Reading Road, particularly as the road slopes down to the north.
5. The appellant references an existing garage to the front of another property along Reading Road, St Helen's. This property is some distance from the appeal site, around a corner and the two sites are not visually seen together. Moreover, this singular occurrence of a built structure adjacent to the road is an anomaly rather than part of the prevailing pattern of development, and there are differences in the character along the long length of Reading Road. Each proposal is to be considered on its own merits and I do not find that this provides a precedent for garaging in a forward position.

6. I acknowledge that the proposed design and materials of the garage would be appropriate for the general locality, and it would be of a limited scale, being less than the Council's minimum size standards for a garage. Nonetheless, the garage would be an incongruous feature in the street scene due to its siting. Positioned significantly beyond the existing building line it would create a visually prominent structure out of keeping with the established character.
7. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and thus contrary to Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (2020), Policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) (2009), and Policy HK12 of the Hook Neighbourhood Plan (2019). Together these policies, amongst other things, seek a high-quality design that is in keeping with and makes a positive contribution to the local character, and which reflects and incorporates distinctive qualities of its surroundings.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR