



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2023

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/D/23/3322622

6 Nelson Court, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EL

- 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 Ms Jocelyn Stares and Mr Mike Nash against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref 3PL/2023/0319/HOU, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a garage/workshop.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Nelson Court is a residential estate of semi-detached pairs of dwellings, chalet bungalows and bungalows set out across a number of streets. The estate has a distinct, suburban style layout with dwellings set back in their plots behind generous front gardens, with broad footpaths and grass verges that combine to create an open aspect along the streets. This sense of spaciousness is amplified by the generally low boundary treatments to the fronts of dwellings which allow views across multiple front gardens. The boundary treatments mainly comprise low hedges, railings or walls of less than one metre with some open frontages.
4. The appeal dwelling occupies a corner plot at the end of a row of semi-detached dwellings, close to two T-junctions which combine to create a particularly expansive layout to the immediate area. The appeal dwelling has a large side garden that is one of the few enclosed by taller panel fencing. At present, there are a number of timber sheds standing behind the fencing along the side boundary with No 7. However, the size of the side garden and the fact that the existing outbuildings largely sit below the level of the fencing means that there is still a sense of openness to the plot that contributes to the overall spaciousness of the estate layout.
5. The proposed garage would be located to the front corner of the plot. It is unclear from the plans whether the existing fencing would be retained on the front boundary, but a vehicular access to the garage is proposed which would require at least partial removal of the fencing. The garage would stand some 2.275 metres at the eaves and 4.42 metres at the ridge, with a square footprint of just under 6 metres length and depth, effectively a double garage, even if only a single garage door is shown on the plans. This would be a

substantial structure that would stand well in front of the main building line, forming a prominent and uncharacteristic feature of a streetscape which has no structures of comparable size within front or side gardens. The scale and massing of the garage would contrast markedly with the open front gardens which are a positive and well-maintained characteristic of the estate and detract from the appearance of the area as a result.

6. I appreciate that the appellants have existing outbuildings in a similar location within the side garden, but these are significantly more modest, timber sheds of much lower height which are largely concealed from view by the existing boundary fencing. Conversely, the garage would be substantially taller and more visible, even if fencing is retained on the front boundary. However, the proposed vehicular access would expose the full scale of the garage to view from the footpath in front of the dwelling and points to the south. The fact that the garage would be constructed in materials to match the dwelling would not mitigate its overbearing scale within the streetscene.
7. Moreover, the garage would not be concealed from view as claimed by the appellants. A large lime tree in the front garden of the dwelling would screen some views of the garage when looking towards the site from the south on the near side of the street. However, from across the street and across a wide arc from the south-east to the north-west, roughly from No 67 around to No 98, and long vistas along the streets to the north and east, the garage would be in plain view and form an intrusive feature across a considerable extent of the streetscene within the estate.
8. For these reasons, the proposed garage would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies COM01 and GEN02 of the Breckland Local Plan (November 2019), which together require development to be designed to the highest possible standards, to respect and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area and be compatible in terms of layout, form, style, massing, scale, density, orientation, materials and design.

Other Matters

9. The appellants claim the garden layout makes it difficult to place a garage elsewhere on the site. There is no inherent requirement for a dwelling to have a garage, particularly one of the size proposed, and the fact that there may be no alternatives that would suit the appellants' private interests is not a factor that weighs in favour of the proposal.
10. The Council did not find harm in respect of effects on trees, highway safety or neighbours' living conditions. However, the absence of harm in these respects means they are neutral factors weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that suggest permission should nevertheless be granted. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR