
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2023

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/23/3325790
44 Cavell Crescent, Dartford, Kent, DA1 5NS

- 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 Abiodun Olaitan against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. DA/23/00376/FUL, dated 22 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and the creation of a new annex to provide ancillary family accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on a corner plot, with the host house fronting onto Cavell Crescent, and its garaging and parking accessed from Shaftesbury Lane to the side. The existing garage is in a highly prominent position, as it sits on elevated ground to the rear of the house. The land levels continue to rise beyond the appeal site.
4. Although the existing garage and store is flat roofed, it occupies a significant portion of the rear of the appeal site, and is visible due to its elevated position and views across the open access. However, despite its large footprint, its height and flat roofed form means that it retains a degree of visual subservience to the host house; and as garaging, it is a typical feature in the street scene. There is a limited gap between the garage and house, with most of the amenity space for the dwelling being located to the side, alongside Shaftesbury Lane.
5. The proposed annexe would be built on the footprint of the existing garage, excluding a small store on the northern end of the building. However, this modest reduction in footprint would not be noticeable from outside of the site, and would be offset by the significant increase in the height and bulk of the building as a result of its pitched roof. Although the replacement building would be lower in height than the main house, it would appear overly large on the

plot, and unduly dominant alongside the dwelling. The use of matching roof pitch and materials to the house would not mitigate the visual intrusion in the street scene. I appreciate that the design and condition of the existing outbuilding does not make a positive contribution to the area, but an enhancement to its appearance could be achieved without a significant increase in its bulk.

6. In principle, use of the building as annexe accommodation to the main house could be controlled by a planning condition, as suggested by the appellant. There would be no loss of garden and there are off-street parking spaces in front of the garage. If occupied as an annexe, as applied for, the existing garden space and parking would appear to be sufficient to meet the needs of the single household. With no door in the roadside elevation, I do not share the Council's view that the building would appear as a separate dwelling. However, a building of this size, scale and siting, with the appearance of habitable accommodation as opposed to the existing garaging, would be at odds with the existing pattern of development in the area.
7. I note that there are other outbuildings in the vicinity, including a double garage to the south and flat roofed building in the rear garden of the attached house, 42 Cavell Crescent. However, none appear to be of such large scale as proposed in this case, nor appear as dominant alongside the dwellings which they serve.
8. I appreciate the intended occupancy of the annexe, and the appellant makes reference to severe housing difficulties encountered by younger people in the southeast of England. I also acknowledge that the site is sustainably located. However, these factors would not justify the proposal given the harm which has been identified.
9. The proposal would not result in overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring residents, but this absence of additional harm would not outweigh the adverse visual impact.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the host property and the wider street scene, contrary to Policy DP2 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan 2017 (DDP), which amongst other criteria seeks good design which is reinforced and enhanced through integrating new development with the public realm, with regard to matters including how the height, mass, form, scale, siting, and roof form relate to neighbouring buildings, as well as the wider locality; and contrary to DDP Policy DP7, which requires development to retain or enhance the character, local environment and amenity of established residential areas, to achieve satisfactory quality of residential/householder development, and to ensure that the design proposed is not visually obtrusive.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR