



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2023

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/23/3321676

12 Wents Wood, Weaving, Kent ME14 5BL

- 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 and Mrs Nigel Whitlock against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/505909/FULL, dated 11 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2023.
 - The proposed development is for a detached garage.
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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. The appeal site relates to a small area of grassed amenity land to the front of the host property, which is a two-storey detached house with off-street parking. The local neighbourhood is predominantly residential in nature.
4. Standing on Weaving Street at the junction with Wents Wood, the current view is one of trees and hedgerows bordering the narrow cul-de-sac roadway. The built form of the houses at 11 and 12 Wents Wood is glimpsed as a backdrop through the vegetation, which gives a pleasant and spacious feel to the locale.
5. The positioning of the new detached garage would be highly prominent within the context of the streetscene, and the unattractive blank rear and side walls of the scheme would be clearly evident from the public domain. This would appear discordant and erode the character of the area, primarily due to the height and proximity of the building to the highway, and would have a dominant effect over the access road that lies on lower ground.
6. I appreciate that there are other instances of detached garages to the front of dwellings in the vicinity, nevertheless those identified by the appellant are not as imposing as that proposed in this case. In any event, development at other sites would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.

7. I note that no objections are raised by the Council with regard to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties and highway safety, and bat and swift bricks would be provided. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified above. I am also aware that the development could be screened with hedging, still any such planting would need to be of a height, extent and density that of itself would look unusual or out of place in this village situation.
8. I conclude that the scheme would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would contravene Policies DM1 and DM9 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 and the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009, which together seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance.

Conclusion

9. In respect of all matters raised and based on my reasoning above, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR