
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2023

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/23/3317702

30 Meadow Lane, Over, Cambridgeshire CB24 5NF

- 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 Ian Chapman against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03950/FUL, dated 2 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is a detached double garage & carport with office/playroom above.
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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 area, including the effect on the adjacent hedgerow.
3. A further reason for refusal relating to the impact on the setting of No 22 High Street, a Grade II listed building, was withdrawn following the receipt of a Heritage Impact Assessment.

Reasons

4. The proposal is for a large double garage and carport with an office/playroom above in the grounds of No 30 Meadow Lane, a detached house set in a square plot at the end of Meadow Lane. The house comprises a two-storey gabled element and a long weatherboarded barn like element with rooms in the roofspace lit by a series of rooflights punctuating the extensive tiled roof. The garage/carport/office/playroom building would be located in the southern corner of the plot, in front of the dwelling, adjacent to a hedgerow which forms the south-east boundary of the plot and runs alongside a footpath link from Meadow Lane to the High Street. The site is currently grass with a mature corkscrew willow tree and some other shrubs of no particular value. There are no objections to the proposed materials, nor from third parties.
5. Providing both a double garage and carport, the building would be a full 9.3 m wide by 6.8 m deep and, with an office/playroom within the double pitched roofspace, a full 6.6 m to the central ridgeline with an eaves height of 3.1 m. The result would be a substantial 83 sq m floorspace building, including a front facing first floor window in the gable, hard up to the hedgerow on one side and approaching to within about 4 m of the house on the other.

6. Whilst the eaves and ridge height of the barn like section of the house are not provided, the garage/carport would be wider and thus the ridge height perhaps similar. In any event, the new building, the size of a small chalet bungalow, seen close to and in combination with the existing house, would appear unduly bulky, visually dominating the southern corner of the plot and out of scale in relation to the main house and its setting. By contrast, the nearby properties in Meadow Lane, such as Nos 15-23 and 22, have suitably subservient ancillary garage buildings with lower ridge lines which would not be the case here.
7. The building would also be intrusive when seen from the footpath link, unduly close behind the hedge and with its long-pitched roof rising above introducing a built-up urban feel to the pleasant intra-village footpath. This forms part of the Over Green Network defined by the Over Village Design Guide (OVDG) adopted in 2020¹. The chalet bungalows opposite, Nos 23 and 21, are suitably set back behind front gardens.
8. Whilst not having any particular ecological value, the hedge makes a valuable contribution to the amenity of the footpath link. The appellant claims that the hedge will be retained unaffected but in the absence of supporting evidence the hedge is unlikely to thrive in the long term with the building hard up to its side and only about 0.5 m from its centre line.
9. For these reasons the proposed building would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, unduly bulky and over prominent in relation to its setting, out of scale in relation to the main house, and potentially harmful to the health and future of the hedgerow. This would be contrary to Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which requires new development to preserve or enhance the character of the local area and to be compatible and appropriate in terms of scale, form and siting to its location. It would also conflict with OVDG paragraph 8.1 which requires the 'green network' through the centre of Over to be maintained and enhanced.

Conclusion

10. The proposal would provide a useful additional facility for the occupiers, more garden space to the rear of the dwelling and some biodiversity enhancement measures. However, these benefits are outweighed by the harm that has been identified to the character and appearance of the area and the associated conflict with the development plan.
11. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

¹ Item 4 in Figure 32