



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/23/3324340

Blackwoods, Bushey Croft, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 9JX

- 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 Wilkinson against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2022/263, dated , 19 February 2022 refused by notice dated 31 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached double bay garage.
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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 existing dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises a large two storey detached dwelling located within a broadly triangular shaped plot. It fronts onto Bushey Croft, an unmade private road that serves a small number of dwellings and which turns into a footpath link to the public playing fields to the south of the site. Surrounding dwellings are mixed in character and appearance and are mostly sited within large, well landscaped plots.
4. The proposed garage would be located to the front of the existing dwelling. The dwelling has a relatively deep frontage, however the garage would only be set in from the front boundary of the site by about 2m. The proposed garage would be of double width, with a first floor storage area above, served by dormer windows.
5. The garage would measure about 6m by 7.4m. It would have an eaves height of approximately 2.3m and a ridge height of around 5.8m. There are wooden gates along part of the front boundary of the site, with a newly planted hedge and tree along the rest of it which provides limited screening.
6. The proposed garage would be sited on land which is at a lower level than the host dwelling. The garage would be set a distance of about 7m from the front elevation of the dwelling. It would be of a simple design, with a pitched roof and dormer window on its northern elevation, facing the main driveway. It

would be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling and whilst high, given the separation distance and the difference in levels, I do not consider that it would significantly visually compete with or detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

7. In terms of the effect of the proposal on the surrounding area, I acknowledge that the high hedging along the southern side boundary of the site and the mature tree to the front of the adjacent dwelling would provide some screening when approaching from the playing fields. However, the garage would be visually prominent when approached along Bushey Croft from the north and when level with the site, due to its overall footprint, height and close proximity to the road. Furthermore, the side elevation of the garage fronting the road would be unrelieved, resulting in a blank elevation to the road. There are no other examples of garages to the front of dwellings along Bushey Croft and the garage would appear as a particularly incongruous feature which would detract from the spacious character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. I acknowledge the newly planted hedge and tree would provide some additional screening for the appeal proposal. However, the planting will take time to mature and given the height of the proposed garage of around 5.8m, I am not convinced that it would be adequately screened by planting. Furthermore, there would be no guarantee that the landscape screening would be retained in the long term.
9. I acknowledge that the flank elevation of Oak Tree Lodge at the entrance to Bushey Croft is also relatively close to the road. However, it is an established dwelling and is not comparable to the appeal proposal. It is also well screened by high hedging which further minimises its effect on the street scene.
10. I am also referred to a garage / outbuilding which the Council approved at Applegarth on the opposite side of Bushey Croft. This garage is sited within the rear garden of Applegarth and accordingly does not affect the Bushey Croft street scene in the same way as the appeal proposal. It is however prominent when viewed from the park and playing fields to the south although this elevation does not sit within a conventional street scene. I am therefore not convinced that it sets a precedent for the appeal proposal.
11. A further example is provided at 26 Clair Close which is geographically close to the appeal site but is within an area that is not comparable in terms of its character and appearance. The approved garage was also single storey and lower than the appeal proposal and accordingly less conspicuous in the street scene. I therefore place little weight on this example.
12. I therefore conclude that whilst the proposed garage would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, it would nonetheless, result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policy CP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (adopted 15 October 2008) and Policy DP7 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014 – 2029 (adopted July 2014). These policies (amongst other things) expect new development to be of a high quality design which reflects and respects the existing character, setting and local context. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) insofar as it seeks high quality design.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR