
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2024

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/D/24/3338409

Laurel House, Ploughboy Lane, Saham Toney, Norfolk IP25 7JN

- 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 Ian Puttock against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref 3PL/2023/0966/HOU, dated 5 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey garage with carport.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed building on the character and appearance of the street scene; and on parking at the appeal property and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling in a row of detached and semi-detached properties of individual design and appearance located outside but close to the Saham Toney settlement boundary. The surrounding area is predominantly rural in character.
 4. Policies COM01 and GEN02 of the Breckland Local Plan (2023) both require high quality design in new development that respects and integrates with the character of the surrounding area. Policy 3A of the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan (2021) also requires high quality design that responds positively to, and where possible, reinforces and enhances the characteristic features of the local built environment. It also says that the height, scale and layout of proposals should respond sensitively and complement positive features in the surrounding built form.
 5. Comparisons are drawn between the appeal proposal and a previous unsuccessful application for a similar form of development. While I note this, I have considered the proposal before me on its individual merits.
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6. I agree with the Council that the immediate vicinity is characterised by a loose pattern of development of detached dwellings set back from the road with open frontages. This openness is further accentuated by the undeveloped countryside on the opposite side of the road.
7. The proposed garage is of traditional design and appearance and would utilise materials that are appropriate for the rural location. Due to its single storey height and overall size it would be subordinate to the two storey host dwelling. Its position to the front and side of the dwelling would not be unusual for this type of outbuilding where there is no vehicular access to the side or rear of a property. As a result of the depth and extent of the open frontage the garage would not appear cramped or a form of overdevelopment.
8. There are no other examples of similar detached garages within the street scene. However, for the above reasons, the proposed outbuilding would not be incongruous within the residential curtilage of the appeal property. In terms of the effect on local character, the short row of recently built dwellings of which the appeal property is part are set further back on their plots than the dwellings to the north, leading to the junction of Ploughboy Lane with Hills Road. As a result, the garage would have a similar front building line to that of Mercian Cottage, the adjoining dwelling and others a short distance to the north.
9. As Laurel House and its immediate neighbours are seen within this wider context, the proposal would not introduce development in an uncharacteristic position within the street scene. I acknowledge that the appeal property is on higher ground than the road, but the difference in levels is not significant enough to result in the outbuilding appearing unduly prominent, particularly when seen against the backdrop of the materially larger two storey dwellings.
10. Therefore, taking these findings as a whole, I conclude that the proposed building would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene. As such, there is no conflict with Policies COM01 and GEN02 of the Breckland Local Plan, or with Policy 3A of the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan, as described. The proposal is also not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which advocates good design.

Parking and highway safety

11. The Highway Authority's (HA) concern arises from the size of the two parking spaces within the garage, which are considered to be below standard. I acknowledge the appellant's contention that the 6 x 6 metre building is sufficient to park two vehicles. However, it is usual that domestic garages are used for other purposes, such as general storage. Indeed, the appellant indicates that the building would be used to store bicycles. Consequently, a garage needs to be large enough to accommodate modern, family sized vehicles and some storage.
12. The HA has not indicated the minimum size an internal space should be, by reference to particular standards, including the size and layout of spaces. Nonetheless, I agree that the garage is unlikely to be of sufficient size to readily accommodate two vehicles, particularly due to the other domestic uses that are likely to occur. This would result in parking on the frontage area

outside the garage. I accept the appellant's contention that there would be sufficient space to park vehicles in this location. However, with at least two vehicles likely to be parked, I accept also the HA's view that there would be limited space to turn and manoeuvre vehicles such that they could leave the site in forward gear. Consequently, use of the parking area would be most likely to result in vehicles exiting in reverse gear onto Ploughboy Lane, which would not be conducive to highway safety.

13. Accordingly, for these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have a materially harmful effect on parking and highway safety. Consequently, it is contrary to Policies TR01 and TR02 of the Breckland Local Plan, and Policies 3C and 3D of the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan, which are concerned with transport, including parking and safe access. It is also contrary to the Framework, with regard to the effects of development on highway safety and minimising the scope for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles¹.
14. I acknowledge that the garage is intended to deter vehicle crime and that it could provide better access for electric vehicle charging. However, these are not sufficient reasons to set aside the harm and conflict with the development plan found above. The fact that the Parish Council did not object does not weigh in favour of the proposal, but rather is a neutral factor.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given with regard to the effect of the proposal on parking and highway safety, the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraphs 115 and 116.