



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2024

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/24/3343274

1 Bunting Road, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9QZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr R Dougall against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2023/07091.
 - The development proposed is described as '*Remove existing Marley garage form new garage*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposed garage upon the character and appearance of the area, and upon the living conditions at 24 Hilltop Road, with particular regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal relates to a two-storey, detached dwelling within a residential neighbourhood. It occupies a corner plot where Bunting Road joins Hilltop Road. The property fronts Hilltop Road with a side gable facing Bunting Road and set around 1m away from the plot's return boundary along the back edge of the pavement, which is marked by an approximate 2m high close boarded fence enclosing the rear garden. There is an existing double-width, pre-fabricated garage set in the rear corner of the plot abutting its side boundary shared with No 24 Hilltop Road. The garage is accessed via timber gates from Bunting Road with space in front for two cars to park side by side. The proposal is to erect a replacement double garage covering and extending beyond the footprint of the existing, with a pitched roof over, incorporating a mezzanine floor for storage.
4. The outside rear corner of the appeal site is clipped, due to the curvature of Bunting Road at this point, and where I observed the vista in the approach along the road from both directions to be open and spacious in character. This is derived by a combination of factors including the deeply recessed positions of Nos 3 and 5 Bunting Road, with their open plan frontages immediately behind the rear garden boundaries of the appeal site and 24 Hilltop Road, the wide splays and grass verges at the entrance to Siskin Close to the side of No 5, and

the openness offered by the rear garden of the appeal property on the inside of the bend. The low profile and recessed position of the existing garage renders it inconspicuous and ensures the rear garden to No 1 contributes positively to the established character of the street scene.

5. The proposed garage would extend across the full width of the plot when measured along its rear boundary. It would meet the back edge of the pavement at a pinch-point on the inside of the road's bend. By extending significantly forward of the existing garage and encroaching into land that is currently open, it would significantly erode the spacious qualities of the area. The building's intrusive presence would be exaggerated by its overall scale, height, and bulk. Whether the garage would be tantamount to a small dwelling, as suggested by the Council, is moot. Nevertheless, as a domestic outbuilding intended for use incidental to the house, I find that it would appear overly dominant and large within its garden setting. As such, through a combination of its size and siting, I find the proposed garage would appear discordant and out of keeping, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. By failing to appear compatible with, or to improve its surroundings, there would be clear conflict with Policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy, adopted in 2014 (the Core Strategy). For the same reasons there would be conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for achieving well-designed and beautiful places.
6. The appellant has pointed to the close proximity of some dwellings to the road frontages within the wider area including some with front facing garages that project forward and which I observed for myself during my visit. However, neither the layout nor design of these examples reflects the context of the appeal property as I have described it, or the back garden setting of the proposed outbuilding.
7. The appellant has referred to proposals at 1 Marlborough Place, Wimborne and 51 Edmondsham Road, Verwood. Both apparently related to similar type development and both were allowed on appeal (Refs APP/D1265/D/22/3302563 and APP/D1265/D/20/3245249). I have been provided with no specific details of these cases, either in terms of the proposals themselves, their context, or the evidence considered by each of the Inspectors. Regardless, the absence of any identified harm in those cases does not reflect my findings having regard to the specific circumstances at 1 Bunting Road.

Living Conditions at 24 Hilltop Road

8. The building would have an eaves height of 3.34m and ridge height of just over 6m. The rear gable to the proposed garage would abut the side boundary of the rear garden to No 24 and would span over 7m.
9. The building would project significantly above the height of a typical residential boundary enclosure and the excessive scale I have already identified for a domestic outbuilding would be openly seen from the rear garden of No 24 at very close quarters. In my judgement it would impose itself in the outlook from the neighbouring rear garden as having a dominant and intrusive presence that would be overbearing and harmful to the neighbour's enjoyment of their rear private garden.

10. I have noted and considered the existing tall conifer screen that currently runs along the boundary up to the existing garage. However, for the most part this abuts an extension to the rear of No 24. Furthermore, its visual impact as a soft and verdant barrier draws little comparison to the solid and harsh permanence of a built structure. The presence of the existing vegetation does not alter my view that the proposed garage would be harmful to the living conditions at 24 Hilltop Road. By failing to minimise disturbance to the amenity at this neighbouring property, there would be further conflict with the Core Strategy Policy HE2.

Conclusions

11. I appreciate that the proposed garage would incorporate sustainable construction methods but the benefits and policy support for this aspect do not outweigh the harms that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area, and to the living conditions at 24 Hilltop Road. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR