



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2024

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/24/3339098

Southill, Nairdwood Lane, Prestwood, Buckinghamshire HP16 0NH

- 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 Mark Nicholls against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - East Area (Chiltern).
 - The application Ref is PL/23/3153/FA.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a timber constructed double garage at the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description given on the decision notice and appeal form in the banner header above in the interests of brevity, as that given on the application form is lengthy and for the most part serves only to describe the characteristics of the proposed development and the appeal site.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is set well back from Nairdwood Lane and has a sizeable frontage which is typical of the dwellings along this section of the road. There are a mix of dwelling styles evident in the street scene but a notable absence of built form forward of their front elevations. Notwithstanding that some dwellings have high vegetation on their front boundaries, the absence of such built development gives the area a pleasant, spacious, feel and it contributes positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
5. The proposed development would place a double garage forward of the host dwelling and close to the front boundary of the appeal site. Whilst at the present time it would be well screened by boundary hedging, I share the Council's concerns that this screening could be reduced in height or removed. But in any event, whether screened or not, the placing of a building in the location proposed would be out of keeping with the layout and form of the surrounding area and thus would be an incongruous addition.
6. The use of timber as a facing material would further accentuate the impact of the proposed development. Aside from its presence on fencing, timber is not a

prevalent facing material found in the locality and its use on a building of the size proposed would jar with the brick found on the appeal dwelling. Whilst the appellant draws attention to the intended use of hinged doors and associated ironmongery, and they suggest that the specific colour tone of the timber could be controlled by way of a planning condition, these considerations do not overcome the fact that timber would not integrate well in the context of existing facing materials on buildings at, and close to, the appeal site.

7. I acknowledge that the proposal has been designed with a roof pitch that aims to reduce its visual and physical prominence, and that it would be lower in height than other existing buildings in the area and thus appear subservient to them. It would also not appear cramped due to the size of the frontage. Although the appellant has highlighted the nearby motor garage and they offer their view that as a whole the street scene is varied, it remains that there is an absence of built form to the frontage of properties. These considerations therefore also do not overcome the harm that would be caused by the proposed development, in particular in terms of its location.
8. The appellant has highlighted several examples of other buildings to the front of dwellings and/or which use timber as a facing material. I observed each of these during my site visit. Those examples are not however in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site and, being few in number, are clear exceptions which do not define the character and appearance of the area in which the appeal site is found. Whilst development plan policies and the Residential Extension and Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document 2013 (SPD) do not explicitly prevent frontage buildings *per se*, this does not negate the need to consider the impact that a specific proposed development would have.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would fail to accord with Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Saved Policies GC1 and H20 of the Local Plan 1997, where they collectively seek to promote development that is designed to a high standard and which protects character and appearance. The proposal would also fail to accord with the aims of the SPD, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide in the same respects.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has set out their reasons for needing the additional space that the proposal would provide, and I am sympathetic to their requirements in that regard. However, this does not justify the harm I have found that would arise from the proposed development.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR