

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2024

by N Praine BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/24/3343207

79 Gally Hill Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire GU52 6RU

- 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 J Campbell against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00407/HOU.
 - The development proposed is described as a double-width timber garage to front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The character of this part of Gally Hill Road is predominantly defined by dwellings which are set back from the highway, where open gardens and / or driveways provide a frontage setting for the dwellings themselves. This is an important feature within this immediate area and provides a positive contribution to the street scene where the dwellings broadly follow a defined building line, and the observer can enjoy the broadly undeveloped character of the frontages.
4. While hedging and occasional mature trees also feature within this streetscape, obscuring some views of dwellings, and there are also some dwellings elsewhere with garages to their frontages, the important overriding character of the area remains as broadly open undeveloped spaces to the front of dwellings.
5. The proposed development would introduce a detached double garage near to the front boundary with Gally Hill Road. Its height, width and location would disrupt the open and undeveloped nature of the appeal site and would also appear as an intrusive feature within the local street scene. As a result, the proposed development would detract from and be harmful to the character and appearance of the local area, which is generally defined by open, undeveloped frontages.

6. I note a conifer screen exists to the frontage of the appeal property; however, this would not screen the proposed development and would require time to grow to completely screen it. Even if it did, there is no mechanism before me to protect this screen at a suitable density and height, in perpetuity. The existing vegetation, therefore, has limited bearing on my overall findings.
7. I am also aware of a temporary structure to the front garden of the existing dwelling. From what I observed on site, it appears to be a smaller structure and has less visual impact than the proposed development. It is also not clear what planning history this structure has. For these reasons, this has limited bearing on my overall findings.
8. As indicated above, some dwellings have garages, carports, and other structures to their frontages. I have also walked the local area considering the examples the appellant has provided in their statement of case. That said, I do not have the planning details before me for each of these other properties, so it is difficult to make direct comparisons between these and the proposed development.
9. However, these other examples are moderate in number when viewed in the wider context and length of Gally Hill Road. Some are more open, set further away from the highway or smaller than the proposed development before me. Nonetheless, the ones which are more closely aligned to the proposed development detract from the open and undeveloped frontage character of Gally Hill Road. I am not convinced that the presence of harm elsewhere is a reason to justify further harm to the positive qualities of this area.
10. I also appreciate that there were no adverse objections from neighbouring properties and the Council granted permission for a structure to the frontage approximately 10 years ago. However, this was under different local and national policy. Since then, policy has changed, and the Council indicate that a greater emphasis should be placed on creating high quality places. Given my overall findings I agree with the Council in this regard.
11. Consequently, the proposed development is unacceptable and would not sympathetically respond to the existing character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with the relevant provisions of Policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2020, Policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 2020 and the Framework. These, amongst other things, require development proposals to be sensitive to their surroundings and positively contribute to the quality of the area.

Conclusion

12. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Praise

INSPECTOR