



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2024

by Megan Thomas K.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/24/3347226

Coryletum, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell RG12 7DS

- 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 Kwan against the decision of Bracknell Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/00259/FUL.
 - The development sought is two carports.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development has already been carried out but that has not affected my approach to deciding this appeal against the refusal of planning permission. The description of the development on the appellant's application form was "retention of two carports". As the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 does not recognise "retention" as an act of development, I have described the development as for two carports.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider streetscene.

Reasons

4. Coryletum is a detached dwelling located on the north west side of Crowthorne Road. The site is located on land within the defined settlement boundary in a predominantly residential area. There are detached houses either side of it. Tanglewood, Somerton and Tokai-Mura are detached houses running in a south west direction from the appeal site. There is a variety of house types in the wider area.
5. Coryletum has a front paved parking forecourt. It has a pedestrian gate and an electronic sliding vehicular gate made of metal. The gates are reasonably high. A close-boarded fence has been attached to the interior side of the gates to a similar height so that when the gates are closed parts of the house frontage cannot be seen from the road. More fencing has been erected behind the front boundary railings which sit on the front boundary wall and that fencing also obscures part of the frontage.

6. Both flank walls of Coryletum are built close to each flank common boundary. The two carports which are the subject of the appeal are located in the front forecourt. The smaller carport has a maximum depth of approximately 3.92 metres, a maximum width of approximately 3 metres and a maximum height of approximately 2.1 metres. The larger carport has a maximum depth of approximately 6.78 metres, a maximum width of approximately 6.13 metres and a maximum height of approximately 2.1 metres. Cumulatively, both carports cover a substantial part of the front forecourt.
7. The materials used in the car ports are not high quality and their appearance is makeshift. The roof materials jar with the materials used in the main dwelling. The roofs can be seen from outside the property, particularly from Beech Glen which is a road at a higher land level close to the appeal site.
8. Whilst there are currently timber fence panels attached to the gates and railings in order to screen views in and out of the appeal site, future occupants may opt not to retain these or they may choose to leave the sliding gate in an open position for significant periods of time. I am obliged to consider how future occupants might occupy a property and as a result I have to consider in detail the likely impact of the carports on the appeal property and on the streetscene. The carports occupy a significant part of the forecourt and as a result of their scale, height and footprint, give a cramped and overdeveloped appearance to the property. This is exacerbated by the lack of space along the flanks walls of the dwelling with the common boundaries, which contributes to the crowded appearance.
9. The carports detract from the character of the detached brick dwelling and cut down views of it. They do not follow the style of or complement the dwelling with a high quality modern addition. These are some of the aims expressed in the Design Supplementary Planning Document applying to new garages and outbuildings but their spirit applies equally to carports.
10. On my site visit I noted that, amongst other things, Somerton and Tokai-Mura had garages/outbuildings within their front forecourts but these appeared in proportion to those dwellings given their larger plot sizes or larger front forecourt areas. I have taken into account other residential sites brought to my particular attention but I have come to a view based on the individual merits of this case.
11. A member of the appellant's household is described as disabled and struggles in the small driveway leading to the main gate when catching an early shuttle bus arranged by the Council. The carports are said to act as a very efficient preventative and protective measure to help the person cope with schooling and daily life, especially as bad weather exacerbates the disability. I have considerable sympathy for these circumstances, however, the carports would be permanent development if granted planning permission and would continue to harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and wider area long after the appellant family had moved out of the property. These personal circumstances do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
12. Overall, I conclude that the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the host dwelling and streetscene. It is contrary to policy LP50 of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (adopted 2024) and policies HO 7 and HO 8 of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036.

Conclusion

13. Having considered all representations made, for the reasons given above, I dismiss the appeal.

Megan Thomas K.C.
Inspector