
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2025

by **C Carpenter BA MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/24/3346951

59 Connaught Road, Brookwood, Woking GU24 0ET

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Mertens against Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2024/0055.
 - The development proposed is erection of an outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for erection of an outbuilding is refused.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal was made on the basis of the Council's failure to determine the planning application within the statutory timescale. The Council has provided a statement explaining the reasons why it would have refused planning permission had it been able to do so. I have had regard to the Council's statement in framing the main issue.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated in December 2024. However, insofar as the contents are relevant to this appeal, the Framework has not changed. Therefore, I am satisfied no party would be disadvantaged by not having the opportunity to comment on the revised Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. Connaught Road is a residential street comprising mainly detached and semi-detached houses closely sited within relatively narrow rectangular frontage plots. No 59 is detached, with a driveway to one side providing access to and glimpses of the rear garden of the property. From this rear garden, outbuildings visible in neighbouring gardens have modest proportions relative to their host dwellings. This subservient relationship contributes to the suburban character of the area.

6. The outbuilding proposed at No 59 would have largely the same footprint as a previous proposal allowed at appeal¹ and in a subsequent application². The previous Inspector found the earlier appeal scheme would be large, bigger than most they had observed in other gardens nearby, but subservient to No 59.
7. The proposal in this appeal would have a ridge line 0.9m above that of the previous allowed scheme, taking the maximum height to well over 6m. This would considerably increase the perceived bulk and mass of the development and substantially reduce its subservience to the host dwelling. The outbuilding would therefore be very prominent in views from neighbouring gardens, where its height and scale would contrast markedly with existing ancillary structures. The additional height would also be more readily seen in glimpses down the driveway from Connaught Road and would jar with the street scene, notwithstanding the proposed structure's position towards the bottom of a moderately long garden.
8. For the above reasons, the dominant height of the proposed development would undermine the suburban character of the area.
9. I therefore conclude the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This is contrary to Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012, which requires new development to respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and character of the area, paying due regard to – among other things - the scale, height and proportions of adjoining buildings and land. It is also contrary to the Framework, which seeks developments that are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. The Council has no concerns with the effect of the proposal on privacy, light, or noise for neighbouring occupiers, or on trees subject to a condition. On the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree. However, an absence of harm in these respects is a neutral factor and does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

11. I have found the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. No other material considerations, including the Framework, have been shown to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Carpenter

INSPECTOR

¹ Ref APP/A3655/D/20/3254177

² Ref PLAN/2022/0038