



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2025

by John Felgate BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/D/24/3351108

'Coromandel', Lower Farm Road, Ringshall, Suffolk IP14 2JE

- 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 Andrew Cann against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/02665.
 - The development proposed is "erection of a 4-bay cart lodge (retrospective)".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. Lower Farm Road contains a mix of individual detached houses and bungalows in a variety of different styles. The appeal property, 'Coromandel', is a 3-bedroom, brick-built bungalow of mid-20th century design. The front garden area is laid out as a parking area, with a gravel surface. The front and one side boundary are currently enclosed by close-boarded fences to a height of about 1.8m. The 'cart lodge' for which retrospective permission is now sought is a timber structure, comprising a shallow-pitched roof supported on 12 timber posts, which provides covered parking for four vehicles. The new structure stands to the front of the property, and measures about 11.45m long by 5.58m wide, with its roof rising to approximately 2.5m along its higher edge.
3. I saw on my visit that the cart lodge extends from just in front of the house to just behind the front boundary fence, thus spanning almost the full depth of the existing parking area, and covering about one-third of the width of the plot. In addition, its length is only slightly less than that of the house itself, and the height of the roof is similar to that of the main building's eaves. Although the structure is open-sided, its proximity to the existing boundary fencing, and to the house, makes it appear enclosed on three sides. The large number of supporting posts and angled bracing struts, plus the thickness of the timbers, and the depth of the fascia, all add to the impression of a substantial building. Having regard to its size and position, in relation to the existing modest bungalow and its site, it seems to me that the new cart lodge appears as an over-dominant and discordant addition, harmful to the character and appearance of the property.
4. The development is fully visible in close-range public views from Lower Farm Road, through Coromandel's entrance gate. The roof and upper parts of the structure are also visible, above the boundary fencing, in views along the street from the west, over distances of up to 100m and more. In all these cases, the new

structure is seen in the context of the open-plan front gardens of the nearest properties, 'Prithipura' (formerly 'Dawn Devinette') and 'Mayborough', and the contrast with these open frontages increases the development's prominence and visual impact. I appreciate that elsewhere in Lower Farm Road there are other examples of garages sited forward on their plot, but none of these are directly comparable in terms of their size or position, or their scale in relation to their respective dwellings. In the present case, seen in the particular context of the appeal site and its immediate surroundings, the new cart lodge appears as an incongruous and intrusive feature, detracting from the otherwise harmonious street scene.

5. I note the appellant's suggestion that the structure could be softened by the introduction of climbing plants, but there appears to be no evidence as to the feasibility of establishing vegetation in a location subject to heavy shading and compacted ground. There is also no evidence to suggest that the structure would be capable of being adapted to provide a 'green roof'. In the absence of any further information, I am not persuaded that these suggestions would be likely to satisfactorily overcome the harmful visual impact that I have identified.
6. I also note the appeal decision relating to a site at Surlingham, Norfolk¹, where permission for a 2-bay oak-framed cart lodge, in front of the relevant dwelling, was granted. However, that proposal was evidently for a smaller scale development, and was to be positioned partly to the side of the dwelling rather than directly in front. In any event, no two sites are likely to be identical, and I must consider the present appeal on its own merits.
7. I conclude that the retention of the cart lodge as built would give rise to an unacceptably adverse visual impact on the area's character and appearance. In this regard, the appeal proposal conflicts with Policy LP24 of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan, adopted November 2023, which requires all developments to achieve a high quality of design, and to be of a scale and form that responds and contributes positively to their setting.
8. I have taken account of all the other matters raised, but none outweighs this conclusion. For these reasons, the appeal fails.

J Felgate

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/L2630/D/24/3338375