



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20TH January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/24/3355618

28 Bowes Hill, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire, PO9 6BP

- 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 and Mrs Nash against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 58293/001.
 - The development proposed is described as detached garage to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Since the appeal application was refused the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 has been replaced. Within the current National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (the Framework) paragraphs 131 & 135 remain unchanged and so the 2024 Framework has not affected the consideration of this appeal. I confirm that in this decision I refer to the 2024 Framework.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Bowes Hill is characterised by a diverse range of detached and semi-detached family houses that occupy large plots and which are predominantly set back from the highway behind generous sized front gardens. Plot depths and front building lines are varied, as are the gaps between dwellings. This together with the shrubs, trees and soft planting within and around the front gardens, the grass verges and views into the mature landscaped front and rear gardens contributes to the spacious and sylvan residential character an appearance of the street scene.
5. A number of the properties include attached or detached garages within their front gardens. Their impact on the host dwellings and the street scene varies depending on their siting, size, design and the extent and effectiveness of soft landscaping. Typically, they are set back from the road and most benefit from screening by boundary hedges, trees and shrubs and sit within soft landscaped front gardens. The examples referred to by the appellant serve to highlight the importance for such outbuildings to be carefully sited and screened/softened with appropriate soft landscaping.
6. Consistent with the prevailing pattern of development the appeal site comprises a detached family house which occupies a spacious and deep plot, with a large front garden.

The front garden is enclosed by a low Laurel hedge to the front, with a tall evergreen hedge on the northerly side, which sits alongside a large area of lawn. On the other side of the dwelling is a low evergreen hedge along part of the boundary, with the front section of the boundary being open. This boundary sits alongside the access drive which leads to a parking area to the front of the dwelling.

7. Amongst other things policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014 (CS), requires new development to respect the areas particular characteristics and makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness. It should take account of village design statements and provide conveniently located car parking, ideally within the curtilage and in a way that secures a high quality environment. Policy 5 of the Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan (RCNP), which is referred to by the Parish Council and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the Framework are consistent with this.
8. The council's Residential Extensions & Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), advises that new garage buildings should be subservient to the host dwelling, respect its scale, character, materials, and existing building lines. For this reason, they should be sited in an inconspicuous location and will rarely be considered acceptable when sited to the front of the dwelling.
9. The proposed double garage would be modest in its form and design and its external materials would respect those of the host dwelling. However, the proposed garage would occupy an isolated position close to the low front boundary hedge, where it would be prominent and visually hard within the street scene, particularly from the south, where the adjacent boundary between the appeal property and 26 Bowes Hill is open. There would be little room for soft planting between the garage and the southwestern and southeastern boundaries of the site.
10. For these reasons, unlike most of the existing garages sited within the front gardens, the proposed garage would have a visually harsh, enclosing and urbanising impact on the street scene. It would unacceptably detract from and undermine the existing spacious and sylvan residential character and appearance of the surrounding area. This harm would materially outweigh the benefits for the appellants and their family that would result from the provision of a double garage. It is not a matter that could be adequately dealt with by condition. Further, the absence of soft planting, other than the retention of the northerly boundary hedge, between the proposed garage and the host dwelling exacerbates the urbanising harm that would be caused by the proposed garage.
11. Finally, the council has referred to policy HE2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review. However, as this policy specifically refers to alterations and extensions to dwellings, I do not consider that it is directly applicable to the proposal.
12. I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with CS Policy CP29, NP Policy 5 and the SPD.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR