



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2025

by **H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/24/3350234

39A Cordys Lane, Trimley St. Mary, Suffolk, IP11 0UD

- 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 G Dinsdale against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/1275/FUL.
 - The development proposed is detached garage and store above with external staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the appeal was lodged a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and further revisions, have been published. Having reviewed the changes, I am satisfied that they do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal, and that proceeding without seeking further comments from the parties would not be prejudicial to their cases.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) the character and appearance of the site, street scene and its surroundings; and (2) effective landscaping at the site and in the street scene.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site contains a large house set back from the road, behind an open front garden. To one side of the garden there is a 3-bay cart lodge/garage with dormer windows. Opposite is a smaller garage, and the two buildings are served by a driveway leading to an extensive paved area in front of the house. Although the cart lodge is the larger of the two buildings, it is located in an area of the site that is partly screened by trees, fencing, and the roadside planting of the neighbouring property to the south.
5. The existing garage is the more visible of the two outbuildings in the street scene due its exposed position in the open frontage, and its siting directly in front of the house; being set off to one side, the cart lodge has less impact on the front elevation of the dwelling. A mixed hedge and tree belt extends along the northern side boundary of the site, and behind the garage, but it is sparse in parts, and the

building can be glimpsed across the open front garden of the adjacent house to the north. Whilst I acknowledge that views of the site on approach along Cordys Lane from the north and south are limited, the frontage is particularly open and visible at closer range.

6. The proposed garage would be larger than the building it would replace in all respects. It would be greater in depth and width, taller, and with a gable-sided roof in place of the low, fully hipped roof form. Although the roof of the existing garage slopes away from the roadside, the proposed building would present a tall and blank gable end to the public domain.
7. Despite the large and open front garden, the size and scale of the proposed replacement building would appear unduly dominant on the site and in the street scene. It would be an overly large addition directly in front of the house, and would add to the bulk and massing on a prominent part of the site. Although the proposal may be subordinate in scale to the main house and the neighbouring dwellings, this would not resolve its large size in its own right. Considered cumulatively with the existing cart lodge, the front garden would be dominated by outbuildings, and this effect would not be offset by the distance back from the road. In addition, as the existing building is visible in the street scene, I am not convinced that a building of the increased size proposed could be mitigated by vegetation, particular as the proposed replacement hedge would have a maintained height of 2m.
8. Notwithstanding the mixed street scene, there appear to be few examples of outbuildings in front gardens, with most covered parking being to the side of the dwelling served. The neighbouring dwelling to the south has a large outbuilding in its front garden, but this well-screened feature sits on a wider and less developed frontage than the appeal site. The appellants have drawn attention to some local examples, but these are generally much smaller in size and scale than the proposal.
9. Attention has been drawn to an appeal decision for a garage in Little Bealings¹. It predates by some margin current national and local planning policies, and I have limited information about the criteria against which it was assessed. However, although that building was sited next to the road, it was much more modest in size than this proposal. In that case, the Inspector considered that screen planting to the garage would produce an overall result more in conformity with the prevailing character of the area than the existing situation at the site, which would not arise in this case. As such, it offers limited support to this appeal.
10. I do not consider that the proposed building would materially impact upon the wider designated Suffolk and Essex National Landscape cited by the Council, but it would nevertheless undermine the more open and loose-knit pattern of development at this part of the eastern side of Cordys Lane.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the site and street scene. It would not complement local character or respond to local context in matters including its overall scale, height and massing, as required by Policy SCLP11.1 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 (LP). In so doing, it would not accord with the requirement in the Framework for developments

¹ APP/J3530/A/07/2038762 – Troublesome Reach, Playford Road, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, IP13 6ND

to be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Landscaping

12. In order to facilitate the size of the replacement building, it would be sited closer to the northern boundary of the site than the existing garage. Although the planting along that boundary is of mixed quality, the proposal includes the removal of a number of trees and hedge plants. The appeal submission indicates that a replacement beech hedge would be planted along part of the boundary, to the rear of the garage, maintained at a maximum height of 2m.
13. Despite its mixed quality, I share the Council's assessment that the existing boundary planting makes a positive contribution to the verdant character of the street scene. Limited details of the proposed planting have been supplied in this appeal, and I am not convinced that sufficient space would be retained between the new building and the boundary to allow for successful planting and establishment of a beech hedge. The proposed ground floor plan on drawing no. 24/03/0050 Revision E shows a minimum gap of 'approximately' 760mm, and although the boundary is tapered, it is not significantly deeper for the remainder behind the proposed building. No information is given to foundation design, but I think it unlikely that effective planting will be established along this section of the boundary, and there would be limited space for maintenance. In this context, I do not consider that landscaping could be resolved through planning conditions.
14. The appellants advise that there is no protection in place for the current hedgerow and that it can be removed. Whilst that may be the case, if removed it would reveal a much more modest building than proposed in this appeal, and with less consequent harm to the street scene.
15. On the basis of the information supplied in this appeal, the proposal would result in the loss of existing planting which contributes to the character and appearance of the site and the street scene, and it is not evident that successful replacement planting could take place. I conclude that the proposal would undermine effective landscaping, to the detriment of the site and the street scene. This would be contrary to LP Policy SCLP10.4, as it has not been demonstrated that the location, scale, form and design of the proposal would protect and enhance the special qualities of the area, and the visual relationship and environment around settlements and their landscape settings. It would not retain and/or enhance existing landscaping and natural and semi-natural features on site, nor include soft landscaping to aid the integration of the development into its surroundings, contrary to LP Policy SCLP11.1.

Conclusion

16. Whilst I appreciate the appellants' frustration that they had anticipated that the proposal would be granted planning permission, I have found the Council's formal decision to be justified. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR