



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2025

by **David Murray** BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 MARCH 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/24/3351467

Unit 5 Abbot Close, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 7JN

- 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 P K Garage Accident Repair Ltd against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2024/0161.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two storey side extension along with first floor addition to building; proposed 3.2m high walling to enclose front yard along with canopy over the front yard.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. I have used the description of the proposal drafted by the Council as it better describes the work shown on the submitted plans.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed work on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Background

4. The appeal site comprises commercial garage premises which are located on a large business/industrial estate. The appeal site is triangular in shape with a frontage to the main service road and it also lies alongside a long property boundary with the Trackside Business Centre. At present the appeal site unit No.5 and the unit adjoining No.4 have a white painted front wall with a parapet edge to the roof leading to a pitched roof over more functional buildings to the rear. The existing building on the appeal site is single storey and it is proposed to extend this with a two-storey side extension running the length of the northern boundary of the site. Moreover, a two-storey height metal/composite panelling canopy to the front of the building is proposed. The appellant says there is a temporary structure already in place which would be erected/retained.

Effect on character and appearance

5. The main bulk of the new two storey building is proposed to have external elevations in aluminium clad grey panels with lines of windows at ground and first floor, together with additional height to the main parapet wall at the front. Although

the new building would extend very close to the party boundary this does not appear to be an unusual arrangement around this business estate which contains a great array of building forms and materials.

6. I am satisfied that the height, bulk and overall form of this extension would not look unduly out of place in the general environment of this industrial/commercial area. The Council expresses some concern about the degree of flat roof that would be visible especially from the north but there were other examples of flat or very low-pitched roofs on premises near the appeal site.
7. However, I am concerned about the prominence and form of the front canopy proposed. The existing canopy, which the appellant refers to as temporary and the Council says is unauthorised, has a poor and visually imposing form as it appears to be made up from scaffolding poles with untreated corrugated metal sheeting applied to the roof and some of the sides as well as aluminium panels. The submitted plans refer to the introduction of a 'shed canopy' with a 'light metal roof'. The appellant's statement refers to the canopy being retained but in a different form but there is not clear evidence in the application form and the submitted plans for me to be sure about what the structure would look like. I am also concerned that even if the external material and form were acceptable, the height of the partially open structure at the front of the building, and in front of the neighbouring units, would still have a visually dominating effect on the local business environment.
8. The appellant refers to an open canopies at another garage/coachwork premises, however, these do not appear to be of a similar two storey height with a similar visual impact as the appeal proposal, and it is not clear whether this structure has been permitted in any event. This limits the weight that can be placed on this comparison.
9. Overall on this issue, on the evidence submitted and my observations at the site visit I find that the proposed front canopy would have a stark, imposing and harmful visual impact on the local surroundings of this industrial/commercial area. It would not accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies CS21 and CS24 which seek to ensure that new development is of a design and form appropriate to a local area. Although the proposal affects premises in a commercial area the policies are still relevant there.

Other Matters

10. At application stage a member of the public raised concern about the structural integrity of the canopy however this is likely to be a matter for the Council under the Building Regulation rather than the Planning Acts.

Planning balance

11. On the main issue I have found that the proposed front canopy would harm the character and appearance of the area because of its height, materials and prominence and it has not been demonstrated that it could be modified in an acceptable manner. There is therefore a conflict with the relevant policies in the development plan.
12. This must be balanced with other considerations. I have taken account of the appellant's wish to provide better facilities for the staff and customers and to grow

the business. This is generally supported in Core Strategy Policy CS15. However, while the development of the side two-storey extensions proposed would accord with this support, the adverse effects that the front canopy would cause are not outweighed by the economic benefits and the other policy conflict. This indicates that the appeal should not be allowed.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR