



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2025

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/D/25/3363628

25 Park Drive, Hothfield, Kent TN26 1EQ

- 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 Kevin Finch against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2024/2309.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is an end of terrace 2 storey house on a triangular plot that is located on the edge of the built up area of Hothfield. Many of the terraced house in the area, including the appeal dwelling, have had their relatively modest front gardens converted to accommodate off street parking.
4. The short terrace of which the appeal dwelling forms part, is part of a planned estate on the edge of the village that is made up of modestly scaled dwellings in similar short terraces with some semi-detached houses. Park Drive is an unclassified single carriageway road leading from Hothfield into the open countryside, with a footway only on the same side of the road as the appeal dwelling. The opposite side of the road in this part is mainly open fields, with the exception of a parish hall located opposite the appeal dwelling. This is set back from the road behind tall mature evergreen trees that provide a substantial visual screen.
5. The proposal is to build a flat roofed single storey attached garage on the side of the appeal dwelling. This would substantially follow the triangular shape of the appeal plot and would take up the area of the side garden and part of the front garden of the appeal dwelling, projecting forward of the front elevation of the appeal dwelling by 3.5 metres and set back 0.5 metres from the highway boundary to Park Drive. From my site visit it was evident that pre-existing planting on the appeal site, referred to by both the appellant and the Council, had been cleared to the ground, including where the proposal would be positioned, and I have considered the effect of the appeal proposal accordingly.

6. Given the triangular shape of the appeal plot at the end of a terrace, the appeal dwelling has some prominence in the street scene. Given the size of the proposed garage, its extent across the plot and its forward projection, the proposal would also become a prominent addition to the appeal dwelling and the streetscape. Whilst it is common for small oblong shaped attached garages to have flat roofs, the proposal's footprint at approximately 48 square metres and its irregular shape to fit the triangular shape of the appeal plot, would result in it appearing as unduly prominent and incongruous in relation to the pitched roofs and gables of the appeal dwelling and surrounding houses.
7. The prominence of the proposal and its unsympathetic design would be compounded by the extent and scale of the proposal in relation to that of the appeal dwelling and the appeal plot. This would result in the proposal appearing as excessive in scale and dominating to the appeal dwelling. Further, the excessive size and projection of the proposal, forward of the building line of the terrace and that of the rest of the street, would result in the proposal also appearing as unduly prominent and disruptive to the established character of the street. When experienced from Park Drive, particularly from the footway, the dominating effect of the bulk of the proposal, and its proximity to the footway in particular, would result in it having an overbearing effect and oppressive presence within the street, thereby detracting from the streetscene of the local area.
8. In these regards the proposal fails to accord with the objective of the guidance in the Ashford Residential Parking and Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2010) (SPD) and the Ashford Domestic Garden and Outbuildings in Urban and Rural Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance, for the design of residential garages and the creation of attractive places.
9. The appeal dwelling is close to the boundary of the Hothfield Conservation Area (the CA), with my statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in mind, I find that the proposal would not have any significant prominence in views in or out of the CA or its setting and would, therefore, preserve its significance as a characterful village conservation area. Similarly, the appeal site is adjacent to the Hothfield Healthy Farmlands Character Landscape Area but is located within the built area of the village and the proposal is not of a height or scale that I find would result in any significant harm to its setting.
10. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would result in substantial harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area. this would conflict with Policies SP1, SP6 and HOU8 of the Ashford Local Plan to 2023 (2019). Collectively these seek development, including by extension, that is of high quality design, reflects the size and scale of the existing dwelling and responds to the prevailing character of the area.

Conditions

11. I have considered whether a suitably worded condition requiring tall planting of some form, to screen the proposed development in street views. However, I find that this would not screen the design, extent and bulk of the proposal to the degree required to significantly ameliorate the harm that I have identified as an extension to the appeal dwelling or as a presence in the street. As such, the attachment of such a condition would not meet the requirement of the National Planning Policy

Framework (2024) for using conditions for making an unacceptable development acceptable.

Conclusion

12. As no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the harm that I have identified above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR