



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2025 by N Manley BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/25/3362140

8 Shelley Close, Exeter, Devon EX2 9JS

- 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 Ms Ruth Amesbury against the decision of Exeter City Council.
- The application Ref is 24/1220/FUL.
- The development proposed is described as a "Detached double garage (Retrospective application following approval under application 23/0797)".

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council has recently granted planning permission for a detached double garage (Local Planning Authority Reference 23/0797/FUL), replacing a previously demolished single garage. The appeal proposal, which differs from the previously granted scheme, has largely been completed and accords with the plans before me. Planning permission is sought retrospectively, and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
4. Concerns have been raised by the Council regarding the potential future use of the garage. However, any future change of use and potential conversion would require the grant of a separate planning permission. Consequently, I have assessed the proposal and written my recommendation on the basis that planning permission is being sought for a double garage.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. 8 Shelley Close (no 8) is a semi-detached dwelling set back from the highway, within a plot situated at the end of a cul-de-sac. At the front of the property, separated by a large driveway, sits a double garage positioned at the edge of the highway and perpendicular to the house. This garage is directly adjacent to a neighbouring single garage. The site lies within a residential area predominantly

- characterised by properties of a similar size and design. There are examples of detached garages in the area, but these are typically modest in scale and height.
7. The appeal development is noticeably taller than the previously approved scheme. Combined with its prominent location, close to the highway, the excessive height of the garage results in a visually incongruous and unduly dominant addition within the street scene which detracts from its surroundings. Due to its height, the garage also lacks subservience to the host dwelling, by appearing excessive in size when viewed against the overall scale and proportions of no 8.
 8. The appellant suggests that the topography of the area makes the height of the proposal acceptable. However, the development sits on lower ground than the neighbouring garage and yet is distinctly taller. I find that rather than mitigating its height, the topography only exacerbates the excessive scale of the development, making it appear unusually large and more prominent within the area, especially when compared to the adjacent garage and others along Shelley Close.
 9. Furthermore, while some nearby properties incorporate elements of render, brick is the primary material within the immediate vicinity. The proposal to finish the development primarily in white render, combined with its excessive height, would highlight further the building's incongruity.
 10. The Council has raised additional concerns regarding the proposed doors and fenestration to the rear which, along with roof lights, give the garage an overly domestic appearance. However, as a consequence of where they are located, these features are not visible from the street scene. Resultingly, the structure as built still presents as a garage when viewed from the road, featuring garage doors on the front and only a minor alteration to the fenestration on the eastern elevation compared to the previously approved scheme. In isolation, the positioning of these additional features does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property or area.
 11. I have considered the appellant's claim that the proposal delivers sustainable development in line with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, the Framework makes it clear that good design is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development and I have found the design of the proposal harms the character and appearance of both the area and the host property.
 12. While I acknowledge the potential economic benefits from the development and the appellant's gain in additional functional space, these are somewhat limited in scale and do not outweigh the harm I have identified. The absence of harm in relation to ecological matters, parking provision and highway safety are neutral matters weighing neither for nor against the proposal.
 13. Given the above, while I agree with the appellant that the proposal retains the appearance of a domestic garage, it causes significant harm to the host property and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it conflicts with Objectives 8 and 9, and Policy CP17 of the Exeter City Council Core Strategy (Adopted 2012), as well as Saved Policies DG1 (b), (f), (g), and (h) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995 – 2011 (ELPFR). Notably, these require development to be of high architectural quality, to protect and enhance the character and townscape of the city, to promote local distinctiveness through excellent design,

and to ensure that height and massing are appropriate to the surrounding townscape, reinforcing Exeter's urban character.

14. I have had regard to Saved Policy DG4 (b) of the ELPFR. However, this policy's overarching aim is to ensure a quality of amenity which allows neighbouring residents to feel at ease within their homes and gardens. The Council has raised no specific concerns regarding harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. Based on my site observations and the information provided, I do not believe this development would cause any undue loss of light, privacy or create a sense of overbearing for any nearby dwelling. As a result, I do not consider the development would harmfully impact the living conditions of neighbouring properties and thus find no conflict with Saved Policy DG4 (b) of the ELPFR.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR