



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2025

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3368277

Longhurst, 481 Woodham Lane, Woking, Surrey, GU21 5ST

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mohammed Lal against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Reference is PLAN/2025/0265.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached single garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached two storey home on a rectangular plot and was undergoing refurbishment and extension works at the time of my visit. It fronts the busy Woodham Lane, the A245. The road has treed open land along some of the frontage and otherwise has many, usually detached, homes which are generally set back and usually with generous landscaped front gardens. The locality is of established, spacious, good-quality suburban character and buildings and planting come together to create an area of pleasing appearance. The proposal is a flat roofed garage in the front garden area and the Appellant's intention is to plant an established screen hedge abutting the highway.
 4. I touch above on the sense of spaciousness which pervades along this main road and it is intrusion into this which, regrettably, is where the appeal scheme fails to represent good design. The forward prominent positioning of built form would run counter to the pleasing low-key aesthetics of this road. The garage would intrude upon the streetscene and I am not convinced that, even if conditioned, instant high hedging within a relatively narrow strip would provide mitigation of sufficient quantum or reliability.
 5. The forward positioned garage with the backdrop of a large extended home would appear cramped on the site and significantly negate the sense of
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openness. Looking along this street frontage, on a run of rectangular plots, a garage in this position would, unfortunately, appear unacceptably incongruous.

6. Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) (CS) are relevant. Taken together and amongst other matters they seek to ensure that new development has good quality design, suitable siting and scale, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the streetscene and its context. This is reflected within principles of the 'Woking Design' Supplementary Planning Document (2015) (SPD), albeit this is a document which cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. For the reasons given above I conclude that there would be conflict with the CS policies and the relevant objectives of the SPD.

Other matters

7. I have considered the examples of frontage garages drawn to my attention. Along Woodham Lane they are numerically very limited, albeit one abuts, which in sum does not suggest to me that they are inherently a determining factor in the character of this road. Additionally, not all would be reasonably held up as being a benchmark for positive streetscene contributions. Furthermore, the locations, plots sizes and shapes, designs, depth and scale of landscape, existence of road verges or the nature of the immediate contexts are generally different from the case in hand. In any event I must determine this proposal on its own merits.
8. I do note the Appellant's listing of matters not contentious between the principal parties and I would concur with the Council's satisfaction on this range of other technical, amenity and environmental factors aside from its refusal reason. I appreciate that a large hedge and/or other landscape would visually improve the frontage, as it stood at the time of my visit, but if one wished, planting could take place without a garage being erected. Finally, I do hope that another storage solution, satisfactory to all, can be found for the household mobility scooter and wheelchair.
9. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
10. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within the Framework.

Overall conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR