



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/25/3367292

4 Howards Wood Drive, Gerrards Cross, SL9 7HN

- 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 K Takhar against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/25/0470/FA.
 - The proposed development is a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, a detached dwelling, stands at the eastern end of Howards Wood Drive, close to its junction with Fulmer Drive. The dwelling was designed with an integral garage, but planning permission has been granted to alter and extend the house, with the garage space to be converted into living accommodation. To make up for the garaging deficit the appellant wishes to erect one in the front garden.
4. The proposed garage would be large enough to accommodate two vehicles, and its rear wall would be sited very close to the side boundary shared with No 4. This boundary is currently hedged. The structure would occupy most of the space along the boundary between the footway, running outside the property, and the house's front elevation.
5. Howards Wood Drive, a lengthy road, is comprised of detached dwellings of a variety of designs set along both frontages, with mature planting and hedges widely evident. There are also a few discreet culs-de-sac. It is a pleasant residential street of good quality.
6. The entry from Fulmer Drive into Howards Wood Drive on both sides is characterised by luxuriant greenery until the appeal property is reached on the right-hand side of the road. The appeal property has a hedge on its frontage and, although partly overgrown when I visited, it is short and would not effectively screen the garage if built. What would be clearly and first seen when approaching the site from the east would be the garage's entrance. The garage is of a utilitarian design,

with its hipped roof serving to accentuate the garage's height and scale. Although the submitted plans do not show it¹, most of the sloping front lawn would inevitably be lost to be replaced by the garage's hard-surfaced access and circulation area. The development, in my opinion, would appear discordant and incongruous in its visual context.

7. Viewed from the west, it is claimed that the garage would be screened by the hedge currently growing on the boundary between Nos 2 & 4. Were it to remain intact that may be so, but I am not satisfied that the hedge or significant parts of it would survive the construction of the garage, given the closeness of its proposed siting to the boundary, and the possible need for an adjustment of levels to achieve a flat floor. No indication is given in the plans that a hedge exists on the boundary or that any account has been taken of its presence.
8. I was invited to follow the example of decisions made in respect of two other properties in Howards Wood Drive where garages in front gardens were permitted. The former, at No 26 was granted on appeal² and relates to a dwelling contained in a verdant and well screened cul-de-sac, where a garage could be sited unobtrusively. The garage at No 38³ is effectively screened by mature hedging. These examples are therefore distinguishable from this case. I was also invited to look within what is described as the wider estate. This I did, but even so, garages within front gardens are very much the exception rather than the rule, and do not justify a proposed development causing visual harm.
9. I conclude that the proposed garage would materially harm the character and appearance of its surroundings. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policies CP8 of the South Bucks Core Strategy and policy EP3 of the South Bucks District Local Plan requiring all new development to be of a high standard of design making a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and compatible with the character of the locality in general.

Other matters

10. Reference has been made to other development plan policies but those to which I have referred are considered the most appropriate in the particular context of this case.
11. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered, including the views of the Town Council, who object, but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations leading to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

¹ Nor do they show the level at which it would be built

² Ref APP/N0410/D/14/2216788

³ Granted permission by the Council in December 2015