



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2015

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 08/09/2015

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/15/3006059

Bowl Reed, Oad Street, Borden, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8JX

- 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 Nick Ratcliffe against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 14/501628/FULL, dated 10 July 2014, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2014.
 - The development proposed is the erection of new single storey garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal site visit was organised on the basis of an access required site visit. Although the appellant was advised of the date of the visit and that it would be during the morning, there was no one at the premises when I called. However I was able to view the proposed siting of the garages through the entrance gates and could adequately assess the proposal without having to enter the site itself. I accordingly proceeded on the basis of an unaccompanied site visit.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Bowl Reed comprises a large detached two storey dwelling set in a large plot to the south west of Borden. It stands in open countryside with the embankment of the M2 motorway immediately to the south. The dwelling is set back from the road and the front boundary comprises a mixture of railings with brick piers, a wall and mature trees. On the south western side of the dwelling there are two detached garages with hipped roofs. There is a further residential property opposite, but otherwise there is no other built development in close proximity.
 5. The site was the subject of a previous proposal for a three bay garage in approximately the same position as currently proposed. Planning permission
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was refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal in December 2013¹, the Inspector finding that the garages would create an unduly dominant and discordant addition which would undermine the character and appearance of the site. The appellant considers that the reduction in scale of the proposal from a three bay to two bay garage would overcome the reasons for dismissing the previous appeal.

6. However, whilst I acknowledge the reduction in scale, the proposed building would still be a sizable structure which would be accentuated by its large roof area. It would be clearly apparent when approaching the site from the east where it would be seen in conjunction with the other two outbuildings above the railings and wall. There would also be filtered views through the trees from the opposite direction which would be more so during the winter months when leaf cover is reduced. My colleague determining the previous appeal considered that the proposed garages would consolidate the front area with a significant built form because of the size and close relationship it would have with the existing outbuildings. I consider that the same harm would occur with the current proposal as well, notwithstanding its reduced size, which would be at odds with the essentially open character of a dwelling and outbuildings within a wholly open countryside setting.
7. Although I acknowledge that there is a need for garden machinery on such a large site, it seems to me that the two large existing buildings should be of sufficient size to fulfil that purpose and any additional need is not outweighed by the harm that would occur given the countryside location. I also do not consider that the building would provide any significant noise attenuation from the adjacent motorway, but even if it did, it would also be an insufficient reason to justify an additional large building. I note that the area is apparently already used for parking but that would be of a more transient nature and appearance and the harm would not be the same as a permanent building. Finally, I have also been referred to other examples of garages nearby and close to the carriageway, and I made a point of viewing those at the time of my site visit. However the full circumstances of those cases are not before me and I am not aware of any particular site circumstances or other site issues which might have existed. They have not therefore been decisive in my findings above.
8. For the above reasons the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies E1, E6, E19 and E24 of the Council's Local Plan 2008 in that the development would not be appropriate to its location, it would not deliver high quality design which promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness, it would not be in scale in relation to the surroundings and would not protect and enhance the countryside. Accordingly the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal Ref APP/V2255/D/13/2208505