



Appeal Decision

by Richard James Bsc (Hons) Msc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 25/10/2023

Appeal reference: CAS-02833-H0G9C5

Site address: 234 Holt Road, Wrexham, United Kingdom, LL13 9EE

- 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 Alan Burns against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WRA P/2023/0114, dated 20 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of garage, installation of wooden fencing and gates.
 - A site visit was made on 12 September 2023.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. For conciseness, I have taken the description of development from the appeal form and Council's Decision Notice.
3. The appellant has submitted plans illustrating two different designs for the proposed garage and images of different timber fencing. The Council determined the planning application on the basis of plans illustrating a pitched gable end garage and treated timber fencing, which would be placed on top of the existing brick wall, between its pillars and would measure 1.6m in height from the ground, with wooden gates of the same design and height. I have dealt with the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The application site comprises the front garden, boundary wall and open gateway of a detached, single storey dwelling, which forms part of a wider residential street frontage of five detached properties from 228 to 236 Holt Road. These dwellings are sited in a consistently staggered layout, some of which have garages to their sides, but with each dwelling set back a similar distance from the road, behind large front gardens and parking areas. The appeal site's front boundary comprises a low-level brick wall with pillars and a newly planted hedgerow behind. Clear views into the site from the roadside are available over the wall, planting and through the gateway. Neighbouring front boundary treatments along this frontage comprise similar low-level walling, some with more established

hedgerows immediately behind and above. Similar domestic hedging also exists opposite the site along Holt Road.

6. The proposed garage would be located in front of the dwelling in the site's corner, behind the front boundary wall and hedgerow. With a total ridge height of approximately 3.5m high, it would be visible from the roadside over the proposed fence and gates.
7. Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies PS2 and GDP1, amongst other things, require development to ensure that its scale, design and layout accords with the character of the site, makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality and does not materially detrimentally affect townscape character. Insofar as they are relevant to this appeal, I am satisfied that these LDP policies accord with Planning Policy Wales.
8. I acknowledge that the garage would be sited within a generous plot size and the dwellings along this frontage are of varied design. However, the large undeveloped front gardens and staggered building line contribute to a sense of uniformity and form positive characteristics of the frontage. Whilst of matching materials to the dwelling, the proposed garage, by virtue of its height and prominent siting, significantly in front of the existing dwelling, would erode this uniformity. With a lack of visible neighbouring outbuildings sited in similarly prominent positions, the proposed garage would be a discordant feature that would harm the character and appearance of the frontage.
9. Turning to the proposed fencing and gates, whilst hard boundary walls are present along this residential frontage, they remain at low levels, with softer hedgerows above or immediately behind, that retain a pleasing natural appearance. The proposed fencing, by contrast, would introduce a new hard boundary frontage at an elevated level above the existing walls, which would also screen views of the softer hedgerow planting behind. In doing so, it would create a harmful austere appearance, which would fail to harmonise effectively with the softer neighbouring front boundary treatments, the effects of which would be exacerbated by the matching gates when closed. Whilst images have been provided of other timber fence boundaries further along Holt Road, I saw that these are located towards the end of the road, close to the roundabout entrance, along a side boundary to 224 Holt Road and to the rear of the terrace properties opposite. They are, therefore, materially different to the proposal and so I give them limited weight in influencing the appeal site's immediate frontage character.
10. The appellant has also submitted photos of other garages and fences within the wider area. However, these were located some distance from the appeal site within varying built contexts. I saw nothing of significant bearing on the individual context of the appeal proposal that would justify the identified harm. I also acknowledge that no heritage or other landscape designation exists on site, however this is of neutral weight to this appeal.
11. A previous planning permission on site included a similar garage under application ref. P/2011/0890. However, this formed part of a larger proposal for a two-storey dwelling, with retained front trees and hedges. It would as such, have a materially different frontage appearance than the proposal before me. I therefore place limited weight on this previous planning permission in forming any clear precedent.
12. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to UDP Policies PS2 and GDP1.

Other Matters

13. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the appellant's requirements for improved privacy and security. I am not persuaded that the appeal scheme is the only means by

which to achieve the stated aims and withholding planning permission would be proportionate in the circumstances. I also acknowledge the lack of other objections to the proposal. However, the harm that I have identified would be significant and would not be outweighed by these considerations.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
15. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

Richard James

INSPECTOR