
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2016

by Jonathan Tudor BA (Hons), Solicitor (non-practising)

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

Decision date: 31 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/W/16/3151177

46 Twatling Road, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8HU

- 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 M P Muddyman against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/0867, dated 7 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2015.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing garage to form 1 No. new dwelling.
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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 the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a leafy area characterised by sizeable detached dwellings with generous front and rear gardens. They are set back from the road on large plots. The special character of the area is recognised by Policy BG4 of the Bromsgrove District Council Local Plan 2004 (Local Plan) which refers to the generally low density of housing in that part of Barnt Green. The proposal to convert the garage to the side of the house at 46 Twatling Road would, given the relatively small, narrow plot, create a high density development which would be uncharacteristic of the pattern and layout of development in the area.
4. Though matching materials are proposed, the conversion would involve extending the garage to the rear and other substantive changes including the insertion of three dormer windows and the addition of a chimney. Whilst gaps between the side elevations of some houses along the road are not that wide, the proposed converted garage dwelling would be in very close proximity to the existing house at No 46 and untypical of the area. It would, therefore, have an adverse effect on the street scene.
5. The appellant argues that there would be no material impact on the street scene because of the presence of tall hedges and mature trees. It is accepted that such vegetation does help to partially screen properties from the road but most are visible at their driveway entrances or through gaps in the trees and hedges. That is also the case in respect of No 46 and its garage. It would also

be reasonably likely that the current high hedge to the side of the proposed dwelling would need to be lowered or removed in order to allow sufficient natural light to reach the windows of the dwelling, which would increase visibility from the road.

6. The extension of the building, creation of a separate garden and construction of a detached garage to the rear with access off Edgeware Drive, would require the sub-division of the existing plot and rear garden of No 46. Policy S8 of the Local Plan dealing with subdivision comments that homes with large back gardens are a common feature in Bromsgrove's suburban and village areas. It states that any such proposals would need to pay careful attention to the established density of development and the character of an area. The proposal contravenes the policy by failing to reflect prevailing housing density and being out of keeping with the nature of development in the area.
7. Whilst I note the appellant's various points including the extent of the conversion works that would be required and the level of screening from the road, I did not observe any similar conversions or housing on a comparable scale in the immediate area. The proposal would make a contribution to the housing supply but I agree with the appellant that the contribution made by one new dwelling would be modest.
8. The above factors lead me to conclude that the proposal would, therefore, harm the character and appearance of the area. It follows that it would be contrary to the clear objectives of policies DS13, S7, S8 and BG4 of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1, which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that proposals respect the setting, form, density, pattern of development and character of an area. The policies are also, in those respects, consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

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

Jonathan Tudor

INSPECTOR