

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2017

by Y Wright BSc(Hons) DipTP MSc DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D4635/D/17/3168057

32 Copthorne Road, Pennfields, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 0AB

- 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 Satnam Dhinsa against the decision of Wolverhampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01309/FUL, dated 22 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'alterations to existing detached dormer bungalow to form six bedroom house'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Appellant indicates that the appeal dwelling is located within the Penn Fields Conservation Area. However from the evidence provided it is clear to me that the appeal site is in the Copthorne Road Conservation Area and I consider the proposal on this basis.
3. Whilst I requested a copy of the Planning Officer report prior to my consideration of the appeal proposal, I was informed that the Council does not produce reports for delegated officer decisions. I have considered the appeal on the basis of the available evidence.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the property and the Copthorne Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The proposed development is located within the Copthorne Road Conservation Area which is a residential area, characterised by a mix of late Victorian and Edwardian 19th and early 20th century semi-detached and detached houses. Dwellings are mainly of suburban character and are set back from the highway with modest front gardens and larger rear gardens.
 6. The appeal site comprises a dormer bungalow which was built around 1924. It sits on a large, wide plot and including the existing attached garage extends almost the entire width. There are two bedrooms in the roof of the bungalow which are served by two dormer windows located to the front.
-

7. Based on the evidence that is before me and my observations from my site visit, the appeal property retains much of its original form, detailing and materials. These, together with distinctive architectural features such as the spreading lines of the sweeping pitched roof, contribute positively to the character and appearance of the property and conservation area as a whole.
8. The development proposes the addition of a floor to the property and roof alterations to accommodate this and the habitable rooms within the roof space. It also includes a single storey extension to the rear and the erection of a larger porch to the front.
9. I recognise that the proposal would generally retain the existing ground floor front profile including the bay windows, the house would be rendered and traditional clay tiles would be used on the roof. I also note that the development proposes to reflect similar building styles and features that exist on other properties within the locality. However the introduction of new architectural features such as gable end walls to the front elevation of the appeal dwelling would not be sympathetic to the property's original design. The proposal overall would subsume the design of the original building and result in development which would not be in keeping with the host dwelling's existing character and appearance. Consequently this would have a detrimental impact on the contribution the property makes to the conservation area.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including any harm or loss of significance through development within their setting.
11. Taking all the above into account, I conclude that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the host dwelling and thus would result in material harm to the significance of the Copthorne Road Conservation Area. Whilst this harm is less than substantial, no public benefits have been advanced by the Appellant to outweigh the harm. The expansion of the property to form a six bedroom detached family dwelling would be a personal benefit to the future occupiers of the property and carries little weight.
12. Consequently the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Copthorne Road Conservation Area, as defined under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This would be contrary to the Framework and the Black Country Core Strategy (2011) (CS) Policy ENV2 which seeks to preserve and where appropriate enhance local character including the historic environment; Policy ENV3 which seeks development that is of a high quality design and Policy CSP4 which includes seeking development that enhances local character and heritage and that is of a high quality of design.
13. The development would also conflict with the Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (2006) (UDP) Policy HE5 which includes seeking to protect and enhance conservation areas and their settings; and Policies HE1, D4, D6 and D9 which together advocate development that respects local character and distinctiveness.

14. As regards the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residents in relation to light levels I note that the Council does not object on these grounds. Based on the evidence before me I have no reason to disagree. Nevertheless the lack of any material harm in this regard would result in a neutral effect that neither weighs in support of or against the scheme.
15. Reference has also been made to the impact of the existing trees on levels of light to neighbouring residents, but this is not a matter before me for consideration.

Conclusion

1. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposals would be contrary to the development plan as a whole and the Framework and consequently the appeal should be dismissed.

Y Wright

INSPECTOR