
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2017

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/17/3170838
5 Davenport Road, Coventry CV5 6QA

- 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 Mrs J Groves against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/2016/1711, dated 22 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Proposed extension to detached garage and change of use to create 2 bedroom coach house'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development proposed would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Kenilworth Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within the Kenilworth Road Conservation Area (CA) which lies to the south of Coventry City Centre and is centred around Kenilworth Road and the War Memorial Park. The majority of the housing within the CA comprises substantial detached dwellings set in large gardens, which give the area a spacious character and varied appearance.
4. Along Davenport Road and nearby roads there are examples of other forms of development, such as modern infill and backland developments and apartment blocks. However, the predominant character of Davenport Road remains of substantial detached dwellings, set within large gardens, in keeping with the wider CA. Attached and detached garages are also a common feature amongst these dwellings. Overall, these dwellings add to the heritage significance of the CA and make a positive contribution to its character and appearance.
5. The appeal site comprises a modest detached garage, which is functional in appearance, and subservient in terms of its size in relation to 5 Davenport Road (No 5), which is a large inter-war detached dwelling, converted into two apartments. Irrespective of the conversion, the outward appearance of No 5 remains as a large detached dwelling within a generous plot.

6. Policy BE9 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001(CDP), sets out criteria for assessing the acceptability of new development in Conservation Areas. Relevant criteria to this proposal are the acceptability of the development in terms of siting, size and appearance and its effect on townscape and landscape features.
7. The proposed alterations and extension to convert the garage into a self-contained two bedroom dwelling would effectively double the footprint and mass of the garage. Alterations to the front of the garage and gable extensions to the roof although well considered would significantly alter the appearance of the garage. The appellant suggests that that the removal of the unsympathetic garage door and proposed alterations would enhance the streetscene and CA. I disagree, the door is important to the identity and function of the garage. Overall, I consider the existing garage to be appropriate in size, which incorporates similar design details and materials to that of No 5. The proposed alterations would neither preserve nor enhance the appearance of the garage and therefore would harm the CA.
8. The alterations and extension to the garage are intended to give it the appearance of a 'coach house' style subservient building to No 5. However, a dwelling from the inter-war would not have a coach house associated with it. Moreover, the garage as altered and extended would be of a substantial size and with no functional link to No 5. Therefore, the proposal would not relate to No 5 as a subservient out building.
9. As a standalone dwelling with no front entrance, low height and narrow plot relative to adjoining plots the new dwelling would not be in keeping with nearby dwellings, which are substantial in terms of height, width and the grounds, which they stand in. More importantly, the subdivision of the original plot would erode the spacious character and the predominant plot pattern of the CA.
10. I have also had regard to the residential conversion of an existing out building at 10 Davenport Road. However, no detailed information is before me as to the background to that arrangement. In any event, the building in that case is set back and significantly smaller than the main building. Therefore, it is clearly subservient. It is also screened in part by a boundary wall and existing landscaping. Consequently, its significance within the street scene is limited. On that basis, it is not directly comparable to the appeal scheme before me now for consideration, which I have considered on its own merits.
11. For the reasons set out above the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA and the significance of the heritage asset would be harmed. I attach considerable importance and weight to the desirability of avoiding any such harmful effect in accordance with section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
12. The harm the proposal would cause to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial on the basis that the proposal would only harm part of the significance. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Whilst there would be a very limited public benefit in terms of boosting housing supply, this in itself does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

13. Accordingly, I conclude that the development conflicts with Policy BE9 of the, CDP, which seeks to support new development that protects or enhances Conservation Areas. Also, the development conflicts with Policies BE2 and H12 of the CDP, which amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new development enhances townscape character by reflecting locally distinct patterns of development.
14. I also conclude that the proposal would conflict with Policy H9 of the CDP, since although the proposal would represent a windfall addition to the housing land supply, there would be conflict with other development plan policies as set out above.
15. The reason for refusal also refers to conflict with the Kenilworth Road Control Plan (adopted 2001) which sets out guidelines for the determination of planning applications within the Conservation Area. However, paragraph 1 of the document sets out that new development or redevelopment entailing the intensification of land use along Kenilworth Road will not generally be permitted, with paragraph 2 listing criteria to be taken into account in those very exceptional cases where development or redevelopment is considered acceptable. Since the appeal site is not on Kenilworth Road, I am not convinced that the criteria apply and I have not had regard to the Control Plan in coming to my decision.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I dismiss this appeal.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR