



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2019 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by A U Ghafoor BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/19/3229775

110 Hugh Road, Coventry CV3 1AF

- 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 Raymond Liu of Severn Diamond Limited against the decision of Coventry City Council
 - The application Ref: FUL/2019/0712, dated 15 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2019
 - The development proposed is conversion and extension of garage to form one-bed unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. These are as follows: 1) Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stoke Green Conservation Area (the CA); 2) the impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of the future occupiers of the garage conversion and the occupiers of the neighbouring properties, and 3) the impact of the proposed development on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network in vicinity of the appeal site.

Reasons for the Recommendation - *First main issue*

4. No.110 and the other dwellings that front the park to the north are part of the Stoke Green CA and the garages that front Hugh Road are also included within it, but the rest of the road are not included. The dwellings within the CA are primarily Victorian and Edwardian buildings and are generally built on larger plots and are a mix of detached and semi-detached properties. In Middle Stoke, terrace properties on small plots are much more common.
5. The properties within the CA on Hugh Road are likely to have been built at the same time and as such they have similar sized gardens with outbuildings to the rear. The proposed conversion would retain the outbuilding to the rear, and as such would retain that plot characteristic. Despite this, none of the gardens appear to have been subdivided. The proposal would be the first to do so in this part of the road and this would be out of keeping with the settlement pattern and would result in the overdevelopment of the plot.

6. The roofs of the garages vary along Hugh Road and the proposed garage would have a part hip/part flat roof design. This would not match the main dwelling, and this would weaken the connection between the outbuilding and the host dwelling. The size and depth of the roof would also appear out of character with the other outbuildings on Hugh Road.
7. The garage offers little architectural or historical merit but combined with the other garages on Hugh Road there is a collective merit to their visual coherence. The loss of the garage door and inclusion of a single small window within this frontage would break this visual coherence.
8. The proposals would therefore cause visual harm to the CA, which is a designated heritage asset. The harm caused would be less than substantial as the building is not considered an important feature. Nevertheless, this harm must still be given considerable importance and weight. From the information provided, limited public benefits to the scheme have been advanced. The appellant argues the design would enhance the appearance of the CA, and the conversion would provide additional accommodation in a sustainable location. Be that as it may, these benefits would not outweigh the harm identified, particularly when considering the weight to be given to the conservation of the asset.
9. I find that the proposed development would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies H3, DE1 and HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016.

Second main issue

10. The garage would extend into the garden for no.110 and as such the gap between the two properties would be reduced. The Design Guidance for New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) requires garden depth to be a minimum of 10 metres, which the appeal proposals do not attain for either garden. The SPG also requires gardens of 50 sqm for 3 or more person dwellings and 30 sqm for 1 and 2 person dwellings. The garden for no.110 would be around 15sqm and around 8sq.m for the garage conversion. The proposals fail to meet any of these criteria which would result in gardens that would not provide acceptable outdoor amenity space for the occupiers of both properties.
11. The SPG requires a 20m separation distance between windows for separate properties and the proposed development would not be able to attain this separation distance. The future occupiers of the garage conversion would be overlooked by the occupiers of no.108, no.110 and no.112 which all have first floor windows which would overlook the garden and rear window of the building. The proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the privacy and outlook for the future occupiers of the conversion.
12. Whilst the SPG was adopted in 1991 it is still adopted guidance and there is no evidence that indicates it should not be afforded the appropriate weight in the decision-making process.
13. A fence is proposed between no.110 and the garage conversion and due to the depth of the proposed gardens this would harm the outlook of the occupiers of both properties, especially the garage conversion which would have limited garden depth. The extended garage would be more overbearing for the

occupiers of the two properties either side of no.110 compared to the existing garage but would not harm the privacy of the occupiers of either property due to the height of the proposed garage conversion and the existing walls between the properties. It would however have a detrimental impact upon the occupier's outlook and daylight due to the scale of the proposed accommodation which would appear overbearing when viewed from the neighbouring gardens. Therefore, the proposed development would harm the living conditions of the future occupiers of the garage conversion and the 3 existing properties.

14. Therefore, the proposed development would fail to meet the minimum standards set out in the SPG in relation to garden sizes and separation distances. This would harm the living conditions of the future occupiers of the garage conversion and the occupiers of the three existing properties. As such the proposed development would be contrary to policies H3 and H5 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 and the SPG.

Third main issue

15. The properties along Hugh Road do not typically have off street parking spaces. This means that the occupiers of the properties must park on the road. The current parking situation on the road reduces the amount of usable highway which in turn has a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network.
16. The Car and Cycle Parking Standards of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 (Appendix 5) requires a single parking space to be provided for a single bedroom property. The appellant has suggested that the future occupiers would be able to park in front of the garage on Hugh Road. The appellants have provided the dimensions of the garage which identified that the garage is below the minimum standard to be considered a usable parking space as set out in Appendix 5. Whilst the garage does not technically provide a parking space the dropped kerb in front of the garage, where the proposed occupiers of the garage conversion would park, is currently available to the occupiers of no.110 and as such they would lose that parking space which would result in vehicle displacement. This displacement would increase the number of cars parked on the road which would reduce the amount of usable highway. This would have a detrimental impact on the ability, for both pedestrians and vehicular users, to use the highway safely and efficiently within the vicinity of the site.
17. The appellants have not identified cycle parking for both no.110 or the proposed conversion contrary to the standards set out in Appendix 5 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016. This would increase the need for the occupiers of both properties to chain their bikes on the roadside which would further exacerbate the concerns identified above.
18. Whilst the site is located in an area that is well served by public transport, the proposals do not meet the parking requirements set out in the Coventry Local Plan 2016. Therefore, the proposed development would increase the number of cars that would need to park on Hugh Road which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network within the vicinity of the site. The proposed development would be contrary to policies DE1, AC1, AC4, H3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 and the standards set out at Appendix 5 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016.

Other Matters

19. The appellants have identified that special consideration should be given as the property would be provide accommodation for those looking to downsize. It is acknowledged that it is important to provide dwellings of varying size, type and tenure to provide for the needs of different groups in the community. Despite this, the appellants have not provided sufficient evidence to show that there is an undersupply of properties for those wishing to downsize in the area or that there is an unmet demand for them that this property would meet. Therefore, I give this limited weight and do not consider this enough to outweigh the harm caused by the identified policy conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I too agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

A U Ghafoor

INSPECTOR