



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2020 by S Watson BA(Hons) MSc

Decision by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4605/W/19/3243824

128 Highfield Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0HU

- 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 Made Architecture Ltd against the decision of Birmingham City Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/07207/PA, dated 27 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2019.
 - The development is a proposed two storey dwelling to the rear of 128 Highfield Road with associated access, fencing and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

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

Preliminary Matter

3. The occupiers of 56 Gresham Road asked me to view the proposal from their property. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions I was unable to do this at my site visit. In view of my recommendation to dismiss the appeal I have not pursued this matter further.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene and residential area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is situated in the garden of No 128 Highfield Road, which is on the south side of the junction between Highfield Road and Gresham Road. The site fronts on to Gresham Road which is a residential street primarily characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings set within long, narrow plots. While not uniform the properties on the street are similar and share design cues, including hipped main rooves and a front facing gable serving a large bay window. I noted during my site visit that a number of properties had been extended or otherwise altered.

6. The proposal includes the erection of a two-storey dwelling set back from the road by a parking area, as such it would continue the building line on this side of the road. The scale and design of the proposal would match the surrounding properties including by way of the main hipped roof and bay window with gable over. Nevertheless, given its shape and size the hipped roof over the wrap-around projection, off the western corner, would be a jarring and discordant feature against the main roof and there would be a visible separation between them. Due to its positioning it would be prominently visible within views from the north along Gresham Road. From my site visit it was clear that although there are similar projections and extensions on the street they are served by simpler and more subservient roof styles, such as pent or flat rooves, these tie into their respective host dwellings. In contrast the proposed rooves would not relate well and, although smaller, the projection's roof would not appear subservient. As such it would provide an incongruous feature which would be out of keeping with the surrounding roof forms.
7. The proposed plot would be significantly shallower and wider than is usual within the street scene. Notwithstanding the overall size of the plot or proportion of it covered by the development, the lack of depth would, by harming the grain of development, not reinforce a positive sense of place. Although I note that the depth of the proposed garden may not be readily visible from public views the combined impact of this, and the reduction in the length of the existing garden, would adversely affect the density and therefore character of the area.
8. The appellant has brought to my attention a number of examples of infill development, of varying scales¹. I find that no example is directly comparable to the proposal before me, either due to its location some distance away from the appeal site, or the type of development itself. No 67, on the opposite side of Gresham Road was one such example of an infill dwelling. However, its location and appearance bear little resemblance to the proposal before me. Moreover, this building is particularly obtrusive and incongruous within the streetscene by way of the building and plot's design and scale. It does not therefore justify other harmful development. Furthermore, while I note that there are local areas with examples of smaller plot sizes such as on Newey Road and Littleover Avenue, these are not visually associated with the appeal site. Moreover, notwithstanding the relevance of the examples submitted, all proposals must be taken on their own merit.
9. A recently allowed appeal at 143 Broad Street, Bromsgrove², was brought to my attention by the appellant to demonstrate that infill development is common and that the character of an area can change over time. I agree that the character of an area can change over time, and that it does appear, from the information before me, that this was the case for the appeal at 143 Broad Street. However, despite recent development on Gresham Road, to which the appeal site fronts on to, it has had no such change in character and the gardens remain characteristically long and narrow.
10. In all I find that even though the proposal is somewhat sympathetic to the materials and design cues of the surrounding area, the form of the roof and plot dimensions would be inappropriate and would harm the character and

¹ 1991/02770/PA, 2008/04105/PA, 2013/07635/PA, 2018/05092/PA, 2018/05741/PA, and APP/B0230/W/18/3208828

² APP/P1805/W/18/3197878

appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies PG3 and TP27 of the *Birmingham Plan 2031: Birmingham Development Plan* and Policy 3.14D of the *Birmingham Plan: Birmingham Unitary Development Plan* which, amongst other things seek for high quality design that respects local character and its surroundings. The proposal would also conflict with Paragraph 127(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework which similarly requires development to be sympathetic to its local setting, including character, history and landscape. Although the Council have referred to *Mature Suburbs – Guidelines to Control Residential Intensification*, *Places for All*, and *Places for Living* supplementary planning documents, they have not referred to the specific parts against which the proposal conflicts. It is not my role to seek out the relevant guidance and, given the length of the documents, it would not be a good use of my time to do so.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. The appellant has raised that there would be a housing provision shortfall within the Greater Birmingham Housing Marketing Area. However, the appellant has also noted that there would be no under provision of the Five-Year Housing Land Supply. Nevertheless, the provision of one dwelling in a reasonably accessible location would make a small contribution to the Government's aim of significantly boosting housing land supply. Furthermore, future residents would contribute to the local economy.
12. While the proposal may make efficient use of land, it would do so in a manner that would be considerably harmful to the character and appearance of the area contrary to local and national policy. The matters raised therefore do not individually or cumulatively outweigh the conflict with the development plan.
13. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR