
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2020

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/W/20/3246529

4 Belbroughton Road, Blakedown, Kidderminster DY10 3JG

- 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 James Hemmings against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0728/FULL, dated 22 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of garage to dwelling with extension and new roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms part of a pair of traditional cottages located close to the junction of Belbroughton Road and Birmingham Road. This location gives the appeal site a prominent position when viewed from a number of vantage points along these two roads. The existing single storey garage at the appeal property sits between the existing dwelling at No 4 and the adjacent dwelling at 6 Belbroughton Road. No 6 is a dwelling of substantial height and this, in combination with its slightly higher ground level, means that it has a dominant visual relationship to the pair of cottages.
4. The existing garage is of a much lower height than the two dwellings that it sits in between. As a result, it forms an unassuming feature in the street scene and allows a substantial degree of visual separation between the two existing dwellings. This is of particular importance given the dominance of No 6 and it contributes positively to the existing character and appearance of the area, creating a sense of spaciousness between the two existing dwellings.
5. Whilst the existing garage is set back into the plot, the ridge height of the proposed new dwelling would exceed that of the existing dwelling at No 4 and the new roof would fill most of the width between the two existing dwellings at No 4 and No 6. The increase in height and massing that would result from the appeal proposal would erode the existing separation and create a visually cramped relationship between the built form of the two existing dwellings and

the appeal proposal itself. This would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

6. Infill development has taken place elsewhere on Belbroughton Road and photographs showing dwellinghouses closely located to their side boundaries have been provided. However, the dwellings and public house closest to the appeal site generally have modest single storey outbuildings to their side elevations. This maintains a spacious visual separation between these properties and it defines the character and appearance of this section of Belbroughton Road. Therefore, the presence of the existing development elsewhere does not justify the harm that would be caused specifically by the appeal proposal.
7. The appeal site and the area surrounding it do not fall within a locally significant view as defined in the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan 2017 (NP) or within a Conservation Area. Nonetheless, for the reasons I have outlined, the appeal proposal would still result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area as a result of its positioning, height and massing. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to accord with Policy CP11 of the Wyre Forest Core Strategy 2010, Policy SAL.UP7 of the Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan 2013 and Policy CB5 of the NP, all of which seek to safeguard character and appearance. There would also be conflict with The National Planning Policy Framework where it seeks to achieve well-designed places.

Other Matters

9. The proposed development would provide one new dwelling within an established settlement. However, it would make only a very limited contribution to boosting the supply of housing. The economic, social and environmental benefits that have been outlined by the appellant, which include those arising from residents using local facilities, the creation of construction jobs and from the conversion of an existing building would also be limited due to the small scale of the proposal. Therefore, whilst these considerations offer some support to the proposal, they do not outweigh the harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Reference is made to a lack of smaller properties in the settlement, and in particular to Section 4.5 of the NP. However, whilst this section does identify a shortage of smaller dwellings within the area and actively seeks to encourage such development, the NP also contains policies that seek to protect character and appearance. Therefore, whilst the proposal would align with some of the objectives of the NP, it would be in conflict with others that refer to character and appearance. It would therefore conflict with the NP, taken as a whole.
11. Although there was no objection raised with respect to the impact upon locally listed buildings, or by consultees and neighbours in general, these factors do not justify a harmful development. The appellant has outlined personal circumstances in support of the proposed development, and I have had due regard to this matter. Whilst I am sympathetic to the need, this consideration does not outweigh the degree of harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Wright

INSPECTOR