



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2020 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/W/20/3248679

24-26 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove B61 7AE

- 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 S Sadeek of Bromsgrove Hand Car Wash against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref: 20/00086/FUL dated 23 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as retrospective planning application for a canopy to car wash area.
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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.

Procedural Matter

3. The canopies have already been installed and the application was made retrospectively.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene and linked to that whether the development preserves or enhances that character or appearance of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) and the St John's CA.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The building is located on Worcester Street which is a narrow commercial street located within the Bromsgrove Town CA. The host building was historically used as a public house and was estimated to have been built in the mid-20th Century. It is a two storey, white rendered building with decorative black timber detailing with a clay tile pitched roof. Connected to the side of the building is a black metal staircase that appears to be a modern addition to the building. The building is not listed but it is identified within the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (published 2011) as an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and I agree with the conclusion of the Appraisal. Whilst the site is located

within a commercial high street, the buildings are typically brick built with painted wooden store frontages which contributes to the Victorian character of this section of the Bromsgrove Town CA.

6. To the right hand side of the building, when facing the building from Worcester Road, a gap has been left undeveloped between the building and the neighbouring building and there is a clear view of the Grade I listed St John the Baptist Church as well as a number of listed buildings located along St John Street. This gap is identified as an 'important view' within the Bromsgrove Town Centre CA Appraisal. To the rear of the building is Spadesbourne Brook as well as a convenience store and its associated car park. Given the limited low-level development between the site and St Johns Road there is clear inter-visibility between the site and the listed Church and the other listed buildings. The Lych Gate is a Grade II listed building that is situated at the top of a flight of stairs that leads from St Johns Street to the St John the Baptist Church and the flight of steps are part of the setting of the Church. The canopies are visible from the bottom of these steps but not from the top of them. The identified listed buildings are located within the St John's CA which is to the north of the site and these buildings positively contribute to the setting of the Bromsgrove Town Centre CA. There is an inter-visibility between the two separate CA's and they both contribute to each other's setting.
7. The canopies have been installed on the rear and side elevations of the building and are approximately the same height as the single storey section to the rear of the building. The canopies have been constructed from white powder coated steel posts with a uPVC canopy that projects out from each elevation with the side canopy extending out into the 'important view' between the two buildings.
8. The modern and utilitarian design of the canopies combined with the white powder coating does not marry well with the appearance of the host building. By comparison the black metal staircase uses appropriate materials which match the black timbers used in the construction of the building as well as matching the black railings and bollards that are common throughout the CA. The appearance of the canopies also does not appear appropriately designed within the context of the Victorian character that is common within the CA. The harmful effect is emphasised because the canopies are clearly visible from the 'important view' between the two CA's. Whilst the staircase partially obscures the canopies, they are still visible from Worcester Road as well as a number of other viewpoints within both CA's. Accordingly, the appearance of the canopies does not preserve the character or appearance of the two CA's.
9. Whilst the canopies are visible from an 'important view' within the two CA's, they are both minor additions to the building and thus they cause less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA having regard to The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework). Nonetheless this harm must still be given considerable importance and weight and this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Whilst I note the need for the appellant to install the canopies to modernise their business, this is a private rather than a public benefit. Therefore, there are no public benefits that outweigh the harm identified, particularly when considering the weight to be given to the conservation of the asset.

10. I am mindful that the car wash generates employment and note the appellant's comments about competition from other operators. However, little information is submitted in support of these claims and it is not clear that the current canopies are essential to the survival of the business. In any event I am not satisfied that the economic benefits of the small business outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area and to designated heritage assets.
11. Accordingly, the development is contrary to Policy BDP.20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2017) as well as the High Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2019) insofar as they seek to ensure that development within or adjacent to a CA should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. The development is also contrary to the Framework in so far as the Framework requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. The development causes harm to the character and appearance of the area and less than substantial harm to the heritage assets and there are no public benefits or other material considerations that outweigh this harm. Therefore, 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

13. 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.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR