



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 26 July 2021

by Mr James Blackwell LLB (Hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1835/W/21/3275083

1 Longfellow Road, Worcester WR3 8DY

- 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 Mohammed Akram against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00978/FUL, dated 7 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as a 2 bedroom attached dwelling to host property in side amenity area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since determination of the planning application, the 2019 iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) has been superseded by the July 2021 version. Both parties have had the opportunity to comment on the changes. I have therefore determined this appeal with regard to the current version.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end of terrace dwelling located on the corner junction of Longfellow Road and Addison Road. It benefits from garden to the side and rear which is screened from the road by a tall conifer hedge. The adjoining properties in the terrace are comparable in size with the appeal dwelling, and share a broadly consistent building line along their principal frontage. They also have a coherent ridge height and share similar fenestration arrangements. These factors give a strong degree of uniformity to the terrace, with the surrounding area characterised by similar dwellings constructed to a coherent design.
5. The proposed development would introduce a new dwelling at the end of the terrace, which would occupy the garden space to the side. The property would be orientated so that its frontage would face out on to Addison Road and its side elevations would sit adjacent to the front and rear elevations of the terrace along Longfellow Road. That, in itself, would diverge from the prevailing layout here.

6. The new dwelling would be much narrower than the other houses in the terrace. It would be stepped back from the front building line and the height of the roof would be slightly lower. In terms of fenestration, on its side elevation (which sits adjacent to the front elevations of the rest of the terrace), there would be one window at ground floor and one at first floor level. The front elevations of the other dwellings in the terrace all include a front entrance and a separate window at ground floor level, and two separate windows at first floor. Taken together, these factors mean the proposed development would appear substantially inferior and subservient to the adjoining properties. In my view, it would more closely resemble a side extension rather than a separate house in its own right. This would detract from the overarching uniformity of the terrace, which would be harmful to the street scene along Longfellow Road.
7. In terms of Addison Road, whilst property types are more mixed, their frontages are generally typified by open driveways and low boundary treatments. Their principal elevations mostly include pairs of windows at first floor level and windows and entranceways at ground floor. The new dwelling's frontage would deviate significantly from these characteristics. It would be largely enclosed by the tall boundary hedge, obscuring much of it from view. Except for a front door and a single narrow window above, its front elevation would be dominated by a large expanse of brick at ground, first and roof level. These design deviations would appear stark and prominent when compared to the frontages of neighbouring houses, which mean the new dwelling would fail to assimilate properly with the street scene along Addison Road as a separate dwelling. Again, this would harm the character of the area. The loss of a substantial part of the attractive mature hedgerow to accommodate the driveway and associated visibility splays would further exacerbate this harm.
8. The private amenity space to be used in conjunction with the new dwelling would be accommodated either side of the property, with the primary area of useable garden being separated from the main dwelling by two off-street parking spaces. This creates an incoherent and dysfunctional relationship between the dwelling and its outdoor amenity space, which is indicative of the site's limitations with regard to accommodating a separate dwelling. This arrangement would also jar with the prevailing pattern of development in the area, where dwellings are characterised by driveways directly to their front and linear gardens to their rear. Whilst I accept that the overall plot size would be comparable with others nearby and would exceed minimum levels in the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD), nevertheless, the discordance between the proposed new dwelling and other neighbouring properties means it would appear incongruous within the wider street scene.
9. For these reasons the development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would therefore conflict with Policy SWDP 21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) and the overarching guidelines contained in the SPD. Together, these seek to ensure new development achieves high design quality which integrates effectively with its surroundings and follows the existing grain of development in the area. The development would also conflict with the overarching design objectives of the Framework (2021) which promote development which protects and enhances the character of an area.

Other Matters

10. Whilst I note the appellant's comments that the proposed parking spaces could be accommodated elsewhere on site, I do not consider that their relocation would sufficiently mitigate the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area. Moreover, there are no plans before me showing the feasibility of an alternative arrangement in that regard.
11. I further note the comments regarding the proposed bin store and cycle storage being accommodated in a compound behind the conifer hedge. However, these are neutral factors and not benefits of the scheme and again would not outweigh the identified harm that would be caused to the street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework and all relevant material considerations, the appeal is dismissed.

James Blackwell

INSPECTOR