



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/21/3287394

21 Arden Vale Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 9NS

- 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 Stefan Robinson against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2021/01386/MINFHO, dated 14 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "construction of a detached timber framed double car-port with flat roof standing on a concrete pad within the boundary of 21 Arden Vale Road, 2m from boundary with 19 Arden Vale Road. Dimensions: 6000mm x 5500mm, height 2300mm. Car-port to be cedar clad to the rear elevation and north side elevation (side closest to 19 Arden Vale Road boundary). Car-port will have electrical supply for subtle security lighting. Development of the car-port is needed so that the existing attached garage can be converted into a home working office as a result of changing work pattern due to covid-19."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the header is taken from the application and appeal forms. Despite this referring to a flat roof, the plans provided to me show the car port would have a pitched, half hipped roof. The appellant's appeal submissions mention a hipped roof and so my assessment is based on the drawings provided.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property lies in a line of dwellings which face Arden Vale Road. The houses vary in style but they are set back from the pavement with no buildings in the front gardens. This layout helps create a fairly spacious street scene.
5. The car port would be forward of the house. Vegetation on and near the site would provide partial screening but by virtue of its height and position close to the pavement, the building would be visible from the road through the access and other gaps in the planting. Moreover, the trees and hedges cannot be relied upon to conceal the development in perpetuity.

6. As a detached building to the front of the house, the proposal would be in an unusual location in its immediate context. Moreover, it would be seen for some distance away when approaching from Warwick Road and visible from the highway directly in front of the site. As such, it would be an obtrusive and incongruous feature that would be at odds with the nature of the street scene. In these respects, it would not comply with the provisions of the Council's House Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2010.
7. The development would be of a modest scale in comparison to the main house and would be comfortably accommodated on the plot. Also, its hipped roof would be of similar style to that on the neighbouring property. However, these acceptable aspects of the scheme would not address or overcome the incompatibility of the car port in terms of its position close to the pavement.
8. Other properties are referred to as examples similar to the proposal. The garages in Ragley Close and Alveston Grove are not directly in front of their associated houses and so are not comparable to the appeal scheme. The outbuildings forward of dwellings on Warwick Road are some distance from the site and do not affect the Arden Vale Road street scene. As such, they do not provide a precedent that justifies the proposal.
9. For these reasons, I conclude the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the area. In these regards it would not accord with policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan 2013, which, amongst other things, seeks good quality design with development that respects the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

10. The description of development explains the car port would facilitate the conversion of a garage to an office for home working. However, there is no evidence to show that the proposal is the only option available to the appellant in meeting this aim. As such, this factor attracts little weight in my assessment.
11. The car port would be constructed using locally sourced wood and it would include a facility to accommodate an electric vehicle charging point. Also, despite the description of development referring to a concrete pad, I am advised the proposal would replace impermeable surfacing with porous gravel and so provide a more sustainable form of drainage. These features indicate the scheme would have some environment friendly qualities. However, these would be minor benefits given the scale of the development.

Conclusion

12. The harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the street scene means the proposal would not accord with the development plan policies when read as a whole. Its benefits and other factors are of insufficient weight to justify granting planning permission contrary to the development plan. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR