



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Zoe Raygen DipURP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/21/3286124

20 Central Avenue, Coventry CV2 4DP

- 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 Mrs Harvinder Khera against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref HH/2021/2254, dated 9 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of ground floor rear extension, first floor side/rear extension and loft conversion including associated roof alterations.
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have taken the description of development from the Decision Notice as this more accurately describes the development proposed. This description was also used by the appellant on the appeal form and included the same description that was on the application form but also included the changes to the roof. As a result, I am satisfied that the appellant would not be prejudiced by this.
4. The site plan submitted with the appeal showed the flank wall of the proposed extension would be built up against the flank wall of No 18 Central Avenue which was contrary to the other plans submitted. The appellant has submitted a revised site plan (drawing No 17/01/2020 02 B) with the appeal which shows the flank wall of the proposed extension set back from the flank wall of No 18 which does align with the other plans. Whilst the appeal process should not be used to revise the proposal that was before the Council, in this instance the revised site plan would amend the plan to accord with the other plans and would not fundamentally alter the scheme. Therefore, I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by accepting this revised site plan. Consequently, the Council's reason for refusal No 2 is satisfied.

Main Issue

5. Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stoke Green Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. No 20 is a detached two-storey dwelling with a hipped roof set back from the roadside behind a large driveway that is bound by tall hedgerows.
7. There is no CA appraisal for the Stoke Green CA and the dwellings in the area vary in character and appearance. The most prevalent characteristic of the CA is the narrow winding roads and the tall hedgerows and trees that bound the roads which gives the area a semi-rural, verdant appearance. A consistent characteristic of the dwellings is that they are typically large, detached buildings set back from the roadside within generous plots, which gives a spacious character to the area. There are a number of Victorian dwellings, and these buildings are typically quite tall and architecturally detailed, although the minor details and the materials used varies across the CA. Further to this there are several modern dwellings that vary considerably in appearance but are similar in scale insofar as they are large, detached dwellings.
8. The roofs of the dwellings in the CA varies with a mix of hipped and gabled roofs and the height of the buildings also varies with some dormer bungalows near to the site with a much smaller profile than the Victorian dwellings. Furthermore, there are a number of dwellings that have dormer windows and skylights.
9. Overall, there is an eclectic appearance to the dwellings in the CA and this positively complements the pattern of development along the winding roads. This creates pockets of development that are hidden behind the tall hedgerows that are visually separate from each other. The significance of the CA comes from the architecturally detailed large-scale dwellings set back from the roadside within relatively generous plots as well as the trees and hedgerows that bound the winding roads.
10. The design of the existing dwelling is generally consistent with the characteristics of the CA insofar as it is a large, detached dwelling set back from the roadside within a relatively generous plot. Given the eclectic mix of dwellings in the area, the design of the dwelling itself insofar as the elevation detail and the roof design are concerned has a neutral effect upon the significance of the CA whereas the scale and siting of the dwelling positively contributes towards it.
11. The proposal would completely change the appearance of the existing dwelling, but this would not necessarily be harmful to the significance of the CA. The proposed side extension would not be set in from the front elevation nor would the roof be set below the ridge line and as a result the form of the side extension would not clearly be subordinate with the host dwelling. Nevertheless, given the other changes proposed, the extension without the render would give the impression that the extension would be viewed as part of the original dwelling rather than an extension.
12. The render proposed on the front elevation of the extension would contrast with the exposed brick across the rest of the house. This would highlight the inconsistent approach between the materials proposed and the proportions of the extension, between either creating a subordinate extension or an extension that would appear part of the original dwelling. Despite these concerns, render is a commonly used material in the area and if the extension was covered by it,

its limited use, in isolation, would ensure it would not harm the appearance of the dwelling.

13. However, the extension would bring the flank wall of the dwelling much closer to the flank wall of No 18. Whilst this would enclose this gap, as noted in the Council's Officer's report, this eventuality was considered when the extension to No 18 was approved. The report concluded that because a 1m gap would be retained, in the eventuality that No 20 was extended, this would ensure that a terracing effect would not be created. The proposal would retain this 1m gap but unlike the extension to No 18, the side extension would not be set back or down from the front elevation or roof of the dwelling. Given that the two dwellings would be similar in height, the limited gap between the two properties with the combined bulk, mass and height of the extension would make the dwelling appear cramped within the plot and when viewed alongside No 18. Whilst the scale of the side extension may not necessarily be harmful to the appearance of the dwelling in isolation, when viewed within the street scene and within the limits of the plot, it would harm the appearance of the street scene and the spacious character of the CA.
14. The proposed gabled roof would be similar to No 18's roof but with large areas of glazing and with a steeper pitch. There are dwellings within the CA that have inserted similar areas of glazing within the roof pitch and as a result the proposal would not introduce an alien feature into the CA. Furthermore, given the limited scale of the glazing it would not, in isolation, introduce a disproportionate amount of glazing to the front gable and would appear appropriate with the design approach that has been taken. The glazing above the porch again would be proportionate and appropriate for the same reasons.
15. The Extending Your Home Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (2003) states that dormer windows should only be placed on a roof slope that is not prominent when viewed from a street, a public footpath or open space. Nevertheless, they are a relatively common feature within the CA and the proposed dormer window with a pitched roof would be well-proportioned with the main roof. Subsequently, the design of the proposed dormer window would be appropriate in isolation.
16. Skylights are a relatively common feature within the CA, but these are typically small skylights unlike the proposed skylights that would extend to almost the full height of the roof. The scale of the skylight would not respect the proportions of the roof and would appear disproportionately large within the front roof slope, despite being quite narrow. While the glazing and dormer window would be acceptable in isolation, when considered together with the inappropriate skylight they would collectively create a visually cluttered front roof slope which is uncharacteristic of the simple and understated roofscape elsewhere in the CA.
17. Therefore, when viewed in the context of the styles of properties in the surrounding area, I conclude that the cluttered roofscape, together with the scale and massing of the extension means the dwelling would have undue prominence in the street scene and, thus, would have a considerable adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
18. Whilst the proposal would introduce large areas of glazing to the rear of the property, this would not be visible from the roads around the dwelling and as a

result, this element of the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the dwelling or the CA.

19. Given the scale of the proposal and because the dwelling would only be visible from a limited area of the CA, the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the CA as a whole. The appellant, considers there to be no harm to significance, he has though also adopted a precautionary approach and states that if any harm were found it would be at the lowest end of less than substantial harm, at most limited or negligible harm. However, I am mindful that less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection and that any such harm is to be given considerable importance and weight.
20. The Framework requires such harm to be balanced against any public benefits of the scheme. The proposal would incorporate building methods to improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling which would be supported by local and national policies that seek to address the impacts of climate change. Given the scale of the proposal, this would provide limited public benefits. Furthermore, there is no evidence before me to suggest that a less harmful scheme could not achieve the same aims. I therefore attach this benefit limited weight. Overall, the public benefits of the proposal would be limited and would not outweigh the harm it would cause to the significance of the CA.
21. For the reasons given above, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies HE2, H5 and DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan (adopted 2016). These policies support the renovation and improvement of housing stock where appropriate as well as expect development to conserve and where appropriate, enhance those aspects of the historic environment which are recognised as being of special historic significance. Furthermore, the proposal would not accord with the advice contained with the SPG as well as the heritage and design policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.

Conclusion and Recommendation

22. The proposal would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. 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

23. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR