



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2022

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/22/3303405

5 Plymouth Road, Barnt Green, Worcestershire B45 8JE

- 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 Sarah Kacoulli against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00275/FUL, dated 25 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is rear extension, porch remodel and roof and dormer amendments. Existing windows amended to heritage windows. Front elevation re-rendered with period correct render and Tudor style fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building (No 5) and the area, including whether it would enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Barnt Green Conservation Area (the CA) and its effect on the setting of non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs).

Reasons

3. The CA is a predominantly residential area to the west side of Barnt Green railway station. No 5 lies in the Shepley part of the CA where dwellings tend to be detached and in sizeable plots. This part of the CA gains its significance through its attractive leafy environment as well as the architectural quality of some of the housing. Of particular interest are the properties that originate from the late 19th and early 20th centuries when plots of land were first made available for railway commuters to build individual residences.
4. The appeal property is from this period and was built as a coach house to the adjoining large residence. Since then, No 5 has been converted into a separate dwelling and the main house has been split into 2 units (Nos 5a and 7).
5. As would be expected given its historic use, the appeal property is of a simpler form with less ornate architectural features compared to Nos 5a and 7. Also, it has been altered and extended. Even so, it still possesses a style and a general charm that hints at its origins from the early 20th century. Also, its smaller scale and close proximity to Nos 5a and 7 suggests its historic ancillary use, which in itself provides an interest. As such, the appeal property has a degree

of heritage significance that merits consideration in planning decisions. Therefore I consider it is a NDHA.

6. Nos 5a and 7 retain many original and attractive architectural features and so they make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. The building is not listed nor formally recognised by the Council. Nevertheless, it is of such local historic and aesthetic interest to be classed as a NDHA.
7. On the other side of the appeal site is 3 Plymouth Road (No 3). For similar reasons to Nos 5a and 7, I consider No 3 has sufficient quality and interest to be treated as a NDHA.
8. The proposed development would include extensions at ground floor and first floor levels to the rear of No 5. These would entirely change the appearance of the rear elevation. From the back garden, the existing side element with low eaves and a hipped roof would be lost and replaced with a taller addition that would appear significantly larger. The proposed single storey flat roof element would introduce a strong horizontal emphasis to the back view of the property. The large amount of fenestration compared to brickwork and the lack of clear vertical alignment between ground and first floor windows would also greatly affect the impression of the appeal property from the back garden.
9. The rear extension would not be widely visible but it would be observed from the appeal property's back garden and from those on either side. From these viewpoints, the change in appearance of No 5 would undermine its historic value as a NDHA, regardless of the external materials that are used. Rather than retaining and providing a clear distinction between the older and newer elements of the property, the development would largely extinguish any sense of history to the building when viewed from the rear.
10. No 5 would remain subservient to Nos 5a and 7. However, by eroding the historic appearance of the appeal property, the proposal would lessen the evident historic association between the 2 buildings. As such, it would reduce the contribution that the setting to Nos 5a and 7 makes towards its heritage significance. Consequently, it would also be harmful to the character, appearance and significance of this part of the CA.
11. The garage at No 3 is of a modern style and includes large areas of fenestration. Also, it can be partly seen from the back garden of No 5. Even so, it does not address or justify the identified harm to the appearance and nature of No 5. However, I am satisfied the proposed development would not harm the setting or significance of No 3, due to the separation distance and the intervening garage.
12. The change in No 5's frontage as result of the proposal would be minor compared to the scale of alterations to the back. However, the proposed half hipped roof to the side projection would be visible and it would be at odds with the overall shape and style of No 5 and Nos 5a and 7. The incongruity would erode the historic value of these NDHAs.
13. The gap between No 5 and Nos 5a and 7 is already narrow and so I find no harm would be caused by the proposal's effect in slightly closing the space. The proposed black vertical timbers at the top of the front gable and conservation style windows would enhance the historic appearance to No 5. However, these

would be relatively minor benefits compared to the harm caused by the identified negative aspects of the development.

14. In summary, the proposed development would undermine the historic and aesthetic value of the appeal property, particularly in respect of the rear extensions and the introduction of the incongruous half hipped roof. As such, it would harm its significance as a NDHA. At the same time, the proposal would undermine the sense of historic context to Nos 5a and 7, which is also a NDHA. Consequently, the development would not preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of this part of the CA. I find no harm would be caused to the setting of No 3 but this represents a neutral rather than a positive factor in my assessment. The improvements as a result of the scheme would be relatively minor and would not address or override the harmful alterations.
15. The development would have only a localised visual impact and so under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. In such circumstances, the Framework requires any public benefits of the development to be considered against the adverse impacts on the CA. The Framework also requires regard be had to the effect of a proposal on the significance of NDHAs.
16. The removal of unsympathetic rendering from the front and the provision of black timbers to the top of the gable wall would improve the appearance of the building. Also, the replacement of the windows would be an enhancement. When considered in isolation, these aspects of the scheme would represent public benefits in terms of upgrading the appearance of a NDHA with subsequent benefits to the CA. However, the identified harm caused by the unacceptable elements of the scheme would clearly outweigh these relatively minor public benefits. In arriving at this view, I have had regard to the great weight that the Framework states should be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
17. As such, I conclude the development overall would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building, a NDHA. Also, it would adversely affect the setting and the significance of the neighbouring NDHA, Nos 5a and 7. Furthermore, it would not enhance nor preserve the character and appearance of the CA. Therefore, it would not accord with policies BDP.19 and BDP.20 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2017 and policy BD1 of the Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan 2020.

Other Matters

18. The appellant highlights that permitted development rights would allow a single storey extension to be erected to the rear of the property. However, I have no substantive evidence that indicates such an extension would be carried out in the event of this appeal being dismissed. Even if I was to accept a single storey extension would be erected, the appeal development would additionally include alterations and enlargements at first floor level. Therefore, I am unconvinced that any alternative scheme allowed under permitted development rights would be as harmful as the proposal before me in terms of its effect on the host property, the setting of Nos 5a to 7 and the CA. As such, the fallback position attracts limited weight in my assessment.
19. The appellant refers to other developments that have been allowed in the CA. However, these would have been considered in light of their own particular

context and none are so similar to the appeal proposal to set a precedent that is bound to be followed in the determination of this appeal. Overall, these other factors fail to attract sufficient weight to influence my conclusion.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons, the proposed development would not accord with development plan policies when read as a whole. Other material factors are of insufficient weight to grant planning permission contrary to the provisions of the development plan. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR