



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2022

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th October 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/W/22/3300351

7 Clent Drive, Hagley, Worcestershire DY9 9LN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs J Purshouse against Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00239/FUL is dated 17 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is two storey front and side extensions, single storey rear extension and elevation amendments.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for two storey front and side extensions, single storey rear extension and elevation amendments is refused.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal results from the Council's failure to reach a decision on the application submitted by the appellant within the prescribed period. In its appeal statement the Council has indicated the reasons why planning permission would have been refused had the application been determined. I have treated those concerns as the basis of the decision the Council would have made had it done so.

Main Issue

3. In light of the above, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is situated in a short residential cul-de-sac, but located on a bend such that the property is prominently located within the cul-de-sac and also as one enters it. The majority of properties are two storey, but the appeal property and the adjacent No.8 are bungalows but of different configuration to each other. Whilst there is some variety of designs and styles, the properties share a general uniformity in having some kind of front projecting pitched roof gable extension, either single storey or two-storey, and some have a first floor bay or oriel window. The properties are in good sized plots and set back from the road with driveways that give Clent Drive an open and spacious character and appearance. Being a bungalow, the appeal property adds to the varied design of the street scene and positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area.
5. In addition to Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP19, which seeks to ensure development is of a good design and enhances the character of the area, the

Council's High Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (the 'Design SPD') provides more detailed guidance on how a high standard of design can be achieved.

6. The Design SPD requires extensions to be subservient and keep the width, height and bulk in proportion to the existing property to avoid making extensions the central feature of the building. In considering the impact on the street scene an extension should not normally project forward of the principal elevation or that fronting the public domain, apart from porches. To be subservient, side extensions should be clearly set down from the ridge of the dwelling and set back from the principal elevation.
7. The proposed first floor extension would sit flush above the existing double garage. It would have a large first floor window and a steep pitched roof to match the existing roof it would replace. The appellant has deliberately matched the roof and eaves height with the existing two-storey projecting extension at the adjacent property No.6 in order to step down building heights towards the bungalow at No.8, which sits the other side of the appeal property. As a result, the ridge height of the proposed extension would be about 400mm taller than the roof of the main bungalow. The extension would also extend along the side across the entire depth of the property and project some 4.3m out from the rear roof, continuing to be taller than the main roof. This would be contrary to the Design SPD resulting in an extension that is not subservient.
8. The appellant's focus on matching the height of the proposed first floor extension with the adjacent projecting gable at No.6 fails to respond to the fact that the other projecting gables in the cul-de-sac are lower than the roofs of the main house they are joined to, whether they are two-storey or single storey. Moreover, whilst the scale and mass of the proposed extension may be similar to the extensions approved at the neighbouring property, they were additions to an existing two-storey dwelling, not a bungalow and hence the context and relationship is not the same. There is already a juxtaposition of building heights with the appeal bungalow situated next to a two-storey (No.6). Therefore, the appeal bungalow and bungalow No.8 already have a legitimate place in the street scene and positively contribute to it. It is not the 'odd one out' nor does it need erasing. Therefore, I do not share the appellant's view that matching the heights of the proposed extension with No.6 is of great importance or that balance or linkage needs to be created between No.6, the appeal property and No.8.
9. Furthermore, the height, bulk and massing of the proposed first floor/side extension, when read side-by-side with the projecting two-storey feature at No.6, would be an unduly dominant form of development that would serve to reduce the spaciousness of the street. Most other two-storey gable features are on properties that are handed and hence they do not sit side-by-side, and this helps reduce their massing and prominence.
10. The proposed two-storey porch would replace a somewhat tired conservatory-style glazed entrance porch and create an opportunity to better define the entrance to the property. The porch would project out and have a pitched roof taking the structure a considerable way up the roof slope. It would have full height glazing at first floor. I saw there were some single storey glazed porches and some first-floor projecting bay or oriel windows on some of the other projecting gables in the cul-de-sac. These were isolated features within their

elevations and none were double-height projecting porches like the appeal proposal. The proposed two-storey porch extension would introduce a visually discordant element to this prominently located property. Together with the front/side extension the extensions would become the central feature of the building, contrary to the Design SPD.

11. The long span of existing flat-roof dormers on the front roof slope would be replaced by the pitched roof porch and an additional pitched roof dormer. Whilst the pitched roofs are in general accordance with the Design SPD, the alignment of three large-span pitched roofs, each with wide fascias and windows occupying a substantial proportion of the front roof slope, together with the porch and first floor extension they accompany, would result in a top-heavy form of development at odds with the more modest existing bungalow and other properties in the street, where dormer windows are not the prevailing characteristic of the street. Whilst the rear dormers would not be particularly visible from the road, they would nonetheless represent a large and substantial bulk to the rear roof slope when coupled with the projecting first floor side extension.
12. The Council raises no concern with the single-storey flat roof rear extension. From the evidence and what I saw on site I have no reason to take a different view.
13. The cumulative effect of the extensions would be discordant and disproportionate additions to the remodelled property as a whole, in relation to both the host dwelling and the neighbouring properties. The resultant property would be out of keeping and would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Bromsgrove District Plan Policies BDP19 and BDP1, which collectively seek to promote sustainable development, good design and enhance the character of the area taking into account the setting of the site. It would also be contrary to the Design SPD.

Other Matters

14. The appellant draws my attention to another two-storey front extension in the Hagley area. However, I have not been provided with full details so cannot make any meaningful comparisons. Whilst other decisions are capable of being material considerations, all decisions turn on their own particular circumstances based on the facts and evidence before the decision-maker at the time. In any event, I must consider the appeal on its own merits in its particular context.
15. I acknowledge the appellant's concerns with the Council's handling of the application and being advised at one stage that the proposal was acceptable. However, in reaching my decision I have been concerned only with the planning merits of the case. The third party comments in support of the proposal do not diminish the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

16. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR