



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 August 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Sarah Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/D/22/3296198

Bluff Edge, Barford Road, Barford CV35 8BZ

- 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 Thomas Guy against the decision of Warwick District Council.
 - The application Ref W/21/1664, dated 2 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is extensions and alterations to the main house and annexe. Proposed detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the extensions and alterations to the main house and annexe.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit at Bluff Edge, Barford Road, Barford CV35 8BZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref W/21/1664, dated 2 September 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted, and the materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans only insofar as they relate to the detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit: Front Gates and Site Plan DWG No. P188-010; Proposed Detached Carport DWG No. P188-008; and Replacement Storage Unit DWG No. P188-009.

Appeal Procedure

3. 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.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Bluff Edge is a large, split level detached bungalow located outside of the Barford village development boundary, within a scattering of large properties

set within large plots. The appeal site is, however, located within the Barford Conservation Area (CA).

6. Policy H14 of the Warwick District Local Plan (LP) (2017) deals with extensions to dwellings in the open countryside. Its supporting text states that for the purposes of the policy, the open countryside is defined as areas other than the Urban Area, the Growth Villages and the Limited Infill Villages and the Council states that the site is not located within any of these settlements.
7. The appellant has referred me to the case of *Julian Wood V SSCLG and Gravesham Borough Council*¹ in support of the point that village boundaries do not necessarily define the physical and functional extent of villages, but rather they indicate where new housing might be acceptable in principle. In this case, the appellant considers that the appeal site is functionally and physically part of the village. The site is located within the more sporadic development to the north of Barford Hill, which forms a transition between the more compact built-up area of the village and the open countryside to the east. For these reasons, I consider that for the purposes of planning policy, it is not within the village and the proposal falls to be considered against LP Policy H14.
8. Policy H14 states that extensions to dwellings in the open countryside will be permitted unless they result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling (excluding any detached buildings), which:-
 - a) do not respect the character of the original dwelling by retaining its visual dominance
 - b) do not retain the openness of the rural area by significantly extending the visual impression of built development; or
 - c) substantially alter the scale, design and character of the original dwelling.
9. The supporting text for Policy H14 states that the 'original dwelling' is defined as the dwelling granted permission if built since 1948, and if built prior to 1948, then as the building stood at 1st July 1948. The supporting text also states that it is not possible to define what is considered to be a disproportionate addition, as this will be dependent on various factors. The text sets out three factors that could influence whether an extension would be a disproportionate addition, however this is not a closed list. Accordingly, whether an extension would be disproportionate could be dependent on other factors not set out in the explanatory text. The supporting text also states that whilst each case will be considered on its own merits, additions that represent an increase of more than 40% of the gross floor space of the original dwelling, excluding any detached buildings, are likely to be considered disproportionate.
10. The Council state that the proposals, in addition to the annexe, which is a later addition, would increase the gross floor space of the original dwelling by around 97%. The appellant has not disputed this. The extensions in addition to the annexe would effectively double the gross floor space of the original dwelling. This would substantially extend the house, and from a quantitative perspective this would result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling.

¹ Julian Wood v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Gravesham Borough Council (2015) EWCA Civ 195

11. The original dwelling is a large bungalow, and the annexe has almost doubled the width of the house. The proposed extensions would add an additional storey with a pitched roof to much of the house and the annexe, as well as two small extensions to the footprint of the dwelling. Given that these additions would effectively double the height of most of the house, the proposal would substantially increase the scale and bulk of the original dwelling.
12. The character of the existing dwelling comes from its low but wide form, which is typical of bungalows, as well as the consistent use of materials across the two elements of the dwelling. Adding a first floor to the house would fundamentally change the character of the dwelling and the form of the original building would be lost by introducing a vertical emphasis to the house. The visual interest of the extended dwelling would be the first floor of the house, where the proposed architectural features, like the gabled projection to the annexe, would be focussed. For most two storey dwellings, this is not uncommon, but because the original dwelling is a bungalow, this first floor addition would not be subservient to the low-level form of the host property.
13. By introducing a first floor, the house would be more visually imposing and the increase in the height of the building would reduce the openness of the surrounding area. Whilst the dwelling is set back from the roadside behind spacious grounds and a tree and hedgerow buffer along Barford Road, due to its additional bulk and height, the building would be more imposing and conspicuous when viewed from the road, as well as from adjoining properties which would highlight the visual impact of the built development.
14. Whilst there is a small section of the house that has timber cladding similar to that proposed, the proposal would result in much of the first floor of the dwelling being covered in this material. This, alongside the white coloured render proposed on the ground floor, would fundamentally change the materials palette of the house. Overall, these changes would substantially alter the scale, design, and character of the original dwelling. As a result, the proposed extensions would result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling that would conflict with all three elements of Policy H14.
15. The proposed car port and storage unit would be significantly smaller than the host dwelling and given the substantial size of the associated grounds, these buildings would not overdevelop the plot. Additionally, the storage building would replace an existing outbuilding. These would be small scale outbuildings and their simple design and siting away from the house would ensure that they would not detract from the primacy of the host dwelling. Given their limited scale and proposed siting, the use of blackened timber would not harm the appearance of the host dwelling or the wider area.
16. Several of the dwellings along Barford Road have gated entrances and the Barford Conservation Area, Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest document identifies that brick and stone boundary walls form part of the character of the CA. The proposed entrance would be limited in scale compared to the size of the associated grounds. Furthermore, the use of brick in its construction would be consistent with the other nearby gated accesses. Accordingly, the proposed gated entrance would appear consistent with the surrounding street scene and would not harm its character or appearance.
17. Therefore, due to their scale and design, the proposed extensions and alterations to the house and annexe would harm the character and appearance

of the host dwelling and the surrounding area and would conflict with Policy H14 of the LP. The proposal would also conflict with Policy B7 of the Barford Neighbourhood Development Plan (Made 2016) which expects building alterations or extensions to be sensitive to the local context in terms of materials, design, colour scheme, scale and structure. Moreover, this part of the proposal would not accord with the general design policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2021).

18. The proposed detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit would not harm the character or appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area. These elements of the proposal are clearly severable from the proposed extensions; therefore, a split decision can be issued. In respect of this element, conditions regarding implementation and compliance with the approved plans as well as control over materials are necessary in the interests of certainty as well as the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

Other Matters

19. I have a statutory duty to consider the effect of the proposal on heritage assets. The CA is based around the historic core of the village and derives its significance from the diverse mix of historic buildings, street pattern and its relationship to the River Avon.
20. Outside of the strict confines of Policy H14, the design of the proposed extensions would not be harmful to the significance of the CA as described above. The design of the proposed gated entrance and the limited scale of the proposed car port and storage unit would also preserve the importance of the associated grounds. For these reasons, I concur with the Council's assessment that the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved.
21. The appellant states that the house could be extended using permitted development rights (PD). The suggested single storey PD extension would be to the rear of the house and based on what I saw on site, the dwelling could feasibly be extended to the rear. Based on the information before me, the permitted development rights have not been removed and as such, I consider that there would be a more than theoretical possibility that the fallback development would take place.
22. The PD extension would be a wide addition to the rear of the property, but it would be relatively limited in depth. It would be single storey in height and would not obscure the original form of the building, unlike the proposed scheme. Accordingly, the PD scheme would be less harmful than the proposed scheme. Given the issues identified above, and because the PD scheme would be less harmful than the appeal proposal, as a fallback position it does not confer any weight in favour of allowing the proposed extensions.
23. The proposal would provide a larger, more adaptable living space. However, this aspect of the scheme would be a private benefit to the appellant and as such, attracts limited weight in favour of allowing the appeal.
24. The proposal would include photovoltaic arrays on the roof which would contribute to the Government's aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the extended dwelling would modernize the house which would also positively contribute towards this aim.

25. Given the size of the associated grounds and the distance between Bluff Edge and the neighbouring properties, the proposal would not appear overbearing to the neighbouring occupiers or erode their privacy. Nevertheless, this would be expected of any development. Overall, the other material considerations considered above have not altered my conclusion in relation to the harm to character and appearance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

26. The proposal would, insofar as it relates to the extensions and alterations to the main house and annexe, conflict with the development plan. The detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit would be acceptable and would accord with the development plan. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight that justify determining the appeal other than in accordance with the development plan and as such, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed, insofar as it relates to the extensions and alterations to the main house and annexe and allowed, insofar as it relates to the detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

27. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the extensions and alterations to the main house and annexe and allowed, insofar as it relates to the detached carport, front entrance gates and replacement storage unit.

Sarah Housden

INSPECTOR