



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2023

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/22/3305752

22 Tamworth Road, Coventry CV6 2EL

- 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 Dalwinder Sandhu against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/2021/3329, dated 18 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is to replace existing 3-bedroom house with 5-bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Prior to the decision of the Council, the appellant submitted amended option drawings. These indicated a potential lower roof pitch to reduce the overall height of the proposed building and an alternative roof design to 2 front dormer windows. However, these diagrams only overlayed potential changes on the full detail of the original scheme. They are described as indicative by the appellant. They were not the drawings on which the Council made its decision.
3. The Procedural Guide to Planning Appeals – England states that the appeal process should not be used to evolve proposals and is clear that revisions intended to overcome reasons for refusal should normally be tested through a fresh application. I acknowledge the appellant's acceptance of a reduction in overall height of the proposed building. However, having regard to the fact that the original development is still the detailed scheme shown on those revised plans, the Wheatcroft Principles, and the degree of engagement of all parties, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the original plans as referenced on the Council's Decision Notice, and on which all relevant parties were consulted.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

5. The site lies within a row of individually designed detached houses on the eastern side of Tamworth Road. The buildings are set behind deep landscaped front gardens mainly enclosed by walls or hedging. Private garden spaces lie to the rear. The majority of houses are low bungalows, but the row includes some 2-storey houses and some with accommodation in their roof spaces.

6. The existing building is an extended 2-storey dwelling with an attached garage on one side and a recessed single-storey wraparound extension to the other. The proposal seeks its demolition and replacement with a detached 2 storey dwelling with a rectangular footprint. The new building would be located roughly central in the plot to coincide with the position of the existing house. It would utilise the roof space by incorporating 2 flat-roof dormers and roof lights. The building is proposed in grey facing brick, a zinc roof and coloured window framing. A timber-framed porch would feature on the front elevation.
7. The footprint of the building would be roughly double that of the 2-storey part of the existing house. The elevations visible from the roadway would be single plane and have expansive areas of single colour brickwork. In conjunction with a greater depth and gabled main roof, it would present as a building of significant height and massing.
8. The building would have a substantial block form. There would be limited articulation in the elevations - a characteristic feature of the houses elsewhere in the row. In the substantial absence of elements or changes in materials to contrast or break up the visual bulk, the design would create a significant sense of scale to the building.
9. Furthermore, the size and blocky appearance of the flat roof dormer projections would add to the overall perception of scale and bulk. The over-large areas of glazing to the dormer faces would dominate the more modest openings on the principal elevation. This would draw the eye and cause the building to appear somewhat top-heavy as well as emphasising the building's overall height.
10. Notwithstanding the variation in buildings on this part of Tamworth Road, the combined aspects of scale, form and detailing would cause the dwelling to stand out as a starkly contrasting element in the street scape.
11. I note the appellant's reference to dormers used on front roof slopes of other houses in the area. However, the examples given show pitched roof additions of more modest proportions and refined appearance. They are not therefore a strong argument in favour of an aspect of the proposal which would appear dominant and somewhat unwieldy.
12. In support of the proposal, the appellant refers me to a previous planning permission¹ for a 2-storey side extension which would add to the existing building's bulk. However, little detail of that scheme is provided. I am not therefore able to draw comparisons, or otherwise, to the effects of the proposal before me.
13. I acknowledge the appellants references to the significantly extended property at 26 Tamworth Road. Notwithstanding that it lies in a larger plot, its design incorporates feature elements and changes in materials to break up its massing. Furthermore, it shares similar materiality with other properties in the row such that it has a degree of assimilation in the group context. Some larger houses further north on Tamworth Road benefit from larger plots, greater spacing and a context of more consistent rows of 2-storey development. They are not therefore comparable to the appeal site circumstances.

¹ HH/2020/1281

14. For the above reasons, I find the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the locality. It would conflict with Policies DE1 and H3 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan [2017] as they require development to respect and enhance their surroundings, positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area, and enhance the built environment.

Other Matters

15. The design reflects the appellant's desire to aspire to high energy efficiency standards. Although an important aspect of achieving sustainable development that may require minor increases in scale, it is not exclusive to the particular design of the building. It is not therefore a matter that would outweigh the identified harm.
16. I recognise that the development would be located where residents would have access to local services and facilities by sustainable forms of transport. It would result in economic benefits during its construction phase. It could provide extended accommodation for family living on a small site which could reduce housing demand elsewhere. However, as those benefits are not dependent on the specific design and appearance of the building, I find that they are not strong arguments in favour of a proposal that would cause significant harm.
17. As requirements of the development plan, compliance with policies in relation to such matters as neighbours' living conditions, flood risk and heritage, or, the lack of objections from consultees, are not benefits in favour of the development.
18. I note the conditions proposed by the appellant in the event that planning permission was granted. However, I do not consider that they would be capable of making the development acceptable in planning terms having regard to the main issue in the particular circumstances of the case.

Conclusion

19. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not be allowed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR