



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/D/23/3315628

66 Birchfield Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 6PG

- 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 Russell Charliez against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0724/HOU, dated 26 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a 2 storey side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellant states that there are mistakes in the plans considered by the Council and has submitted an amended drawing for my consideration. However, the amended drawing appears to detail other alterations to the scheme compared to the drawing which the Council confirm their decision was based on. As such, I consider that interested parties would be prejudiced by me accepting the amended drawing and therefore I have confined my considerations to those drawings determined by the Council.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling; and
 - The level of off-street parking and its effect on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling located in a residential area that is characterised by semi-detached and detached dwellings. The appeal property is in a row of four pairs of semi-detached dwellings which are of a very similar original design and appearance.
5. There is an existing single storey garage extension to the side of the appeal property. The proposed extension would be in the same location as the existing

- garage and would be set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling. The eaves height of the extension would be the same as that of the existing dwelling whilst the ridge height would be lower.
6. Policy DM.25 of the Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan 2016-2026 (April 2022) (LP) requires (amongst other matters) that extensions are in scale and keeping with the form and do not overwhelm the original building which should retain its visual form. This policy is underpinned by the Council's Adopted Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Guidance (2015) (SPD). Whilst not statutory, the SPD does nonetheless provide useful guidance.
 7. The SPD states that extensions should (amongst other things) be sympathetic to the original building and be visually subservient. It also advises that extensions should ensure that the "front face width" of the extension is based on the original proportions of the house to be extended. It states that as a general rule, extensions to the side should have a maximum width of 4/7ths of the original front face width.
 8. The existing house has a frontage width, excluding the garage, of about 6.1 metres. The existing single storey garage extension, with a width of about 4.8m, already exceeds guidance set out in the SPD.
 9. The proposed extension would sit above the existing single storey extension and would have the same width. However, as the extension would extend the house to the side at first floor level, in my view, its effect on the character and appearance of the original dwelling would be far greater.
 10. Whilst the extension would be well set back from the front elevation of the dwelling and would have a lower ridge height, in my view it would not appear visually subservient to the host property due to its overall width. I consider that the extension would fail to respect the proportions of the existing dwelling and would not integrate satisfactorily with it, largely due to its width. As a result, the proposed extension would overwhelm the original form of the dwelling to the detriment of its character and appearance.
 11. My attention has been drawn to an extension which has recently been completed at 68 Birchfield Road. However, the width of this extension is more proportionate to that of the host dwelling and in my view is not directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
 12. In conclusion, I find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. It would fail to accord with Policies DM.24 and DM.25 of the LP, the SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Collectively these policies and guidance require all development to be of a high quality design which complements the character of the area and integrates effectively with its surrounds and reinforces local distinctiveness.

Parking

13. The proposed extension would provide an additional bedroom and the Council advise that accordingly, the appeal property would require off street parking spaces for three cars in order to comply with the Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide (SDG). I note that at paragraph 4.2 the SDG states that garages are excluded from the car parking calculations.

14. Policy SP27 of the LP states that, amongst other things, new development should address road safety issues and have regard to the principles and design criteria set out in the SDG.
15. No parking layout has been provided to demonstrate that three parking spaces could be provided on the site. However, the proposal would retain a garage, and at my site visit I observed that two vehicles were parked on the forecourt albeit in rather a tight arrangement. Whilst there may be a resultant deficiency of parking when assessed against the standards in the SDG, I do not have any evidence before me to suggest that the surrounding area is under any particular parking stress. Indeed, I observed on my site visit that very few vehicles were parked in the street. I am also not convinced based on the information before me that on-street parking in the vicinity of the appeal site would cause highway safety concerns.
16. This leads me to conclude that the proposal would make adequate provision for off-street parking and would not have a harmful effect on highway safety. Thus, it would comply with the main objectives of Policy SP27 of the LP and the Framework which advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Conclusion

17. Whilst I have found that the proposal would make adequate provision for off-street parking and would not have a harmful effect on highway safety, the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling leads me to conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole. In accordance with S38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 development which conflicts with the development plan should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. There are no material considerations of such weight to lead me to the conclusion that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
18. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR