



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2023

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/23/3320398

7 Canal View, Coventry CV1 4LQ

- 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 Parminder Bal against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2022/0000254/HHA, dated 22 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2023.
 - The development proposed was originally described as 'Garage conversion, single storey rear extension, first storey extension and internal reconfiguration'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have considered the proposal on the basis of the amended plans referenced on the Council's decision notice. That scheme omitted the previously proposed first floor extension and indicated that the front elevation of an extension linking the garage to the host dwelling would sit flush with the principal elevation of the garage to be converted.
3. The two reasons for refusal on the Council's decision notice both principally relate to matters of character and appearance. Therefore, I have considered the second reason for refusal which refers to 'the ability to store bins and cycles out of public vantage points' under the main issue.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Coventry Canal Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

Character and appearance of the CA

5. The significance of the CA derives from the canal being an example of an early pioneering contour canal that was vitally important in the growth of the city in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of the buildings and structures adjacent to the canal reflect the industrial and social history of Coventry and the development and street layout of several areas has been dictated by the presence of the canal.
6. The appeal site is situated within the 'Electric Wharf and Bishopsgate Green' segment of the CA as identified in The Coventry Canal Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). Canal View consists of a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced units which are three storeys in height. There is much consistency to

the scale of dwellings on the wider estate which together with its layout positively addresses the canalside environs. There is repetition in the built form on Canal View including in terms of the pitched roof forms, elevational treatments and the regularity in the layout and appearance of associated garaging. These factors combine to give the street scene a distinctive rhythm and cohesiveness which adds to the quality of the built environment within the vicinity of the CA.

7. The single garage serving No 7 Canal View forms one half of a detached double garage building. There is also a similar detached garage building between Nos 3 and 5 Canal View. Consequently, there is a pleasant degree of symmetry and order to this part of the street scene.
8. The increased width resulting from the link extension and the replacement of the garage door with brickwork and windows, would unbalance the symmetry of this building. It would also disrupt the rhythm of detached garage buildings of similar layout and appearance to this side of the street. Taken together, these factors would combine to erode the cohesiveness of the street scene to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
9. In addition, on my site visit I noted a prevalence of bins being stored within the frontages of properties on Canal View. While this only provided a snapshot of the storage habits of residents, the appellant has provided photographic evidence which suggests this is a fairly typical occurrence on Canal View. I also accept some properties in the area do not have rear access.
10. Even so, the existing layout of No 7 does not preclude external access to the rear of the dwelling. The high quality design considerations in Policy DE1 (Ensuring High Quality Design) of the Coventry Local Plan (2016) (LP) include that attention is paid to detail in the layout of developments. Paragraph 130 the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) includes that developments should function well and add to the quality of an area.
11. As the proposal would increase the likelihood of bins and other residential paraphernalia such as cycles being stored in public view, this would not respond well to the above local and national policy requirements. More particularly, it would contribute to visual clutter in the street scene in the long term and would compound the overall detrimental visual effects of the development.
12. Even if the development cannot be directly viewed from the canalside, this does not justify poor design. My attention has been drawn to other development on Canal View. However, the garage conversion that has taken place at No 6 Canal View itself disrupts the rhythm of garaging to that side of the road, albeit I accept that in that particular case the built form was already attached to the respective dwelling as is more common to that side of the street. The extension at No 11 Canal View sits behind a boundary wall and is not comparable to the appeal proposal. Therefore, the examples referred to do not persuade me that the harm resulting from the proposal would be acceptable.
13. Having regard to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA. The Framework states that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a

designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

14. The proposal would result in a private benefit for occupants of the dwelling through the provision of more habitable internal space. However, there are no public benefits in this instance which would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
15. I conclude, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In that regard, it would conflict with the requirements for high quality design including attention to detail in layout, enhancement of the residential environment and to conserve heritage assets in Policies DE1 (Ensuring High Quality Design), H5 Managing Existing Housing Stock) and HE2 of the LP. For the same reasons, it would also conflict with the CAA and the Framework.
16. The Council's decision refers to the Design Guidance for New Residential Development (2023). I have not been provided with this document, therefore it is not clear whether the wording of the 'emerging DGRD' which is referred to in the Council's officer report, was carried through to the adopted document. In any case, this does not alter my conclusion that the proposal would conflict with the policies of the development plan, the CAA and the Framework.

Other Matters

17. The appellant contends that the proposal would not increase parking problems in the area, would not impact on the outlook of the living area serving the host dwelling and that there is no evidence to suggest there would be increased noise and disturbance. I note that the Council did not refuse planning permission on these grounds and from the evidence before me, I find no reason to conclude differently on these particular matters. The effect of the proposal on house prices is not a material planning consideration in the determination of this appeal. Therefore, these factors carry neutral weight and do not alter my overall conclusion.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and in that regard would not preserve or enhance the CA. The proposal therefore conflicts 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. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR