



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2023 by Max Webb BA(Hons) MSc

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4TH August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/D/23/3319473

21 Rothwell Drive, Solihull B91 1HG

- 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 M Azfal against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2022/01352/MINFHO, dated 24 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 5 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is remodelling to the front with side extension, new build garage extension and loft conversion to the dwelling and garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. 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.

Preliminary Matters

3. Permission has already been granted for some of the proposed development, namely remodelling to the front of the dwelling to include two storey front extension, single storey side extension, loft conversion to the dwelling to include front gable, rear dormers and increase in ridge height. Dormers to the front and rear of the existing garage have also been permitted previously.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The area around the appeal site is characterised predominantly by detached dwellings. Whilst having individual identity in terms of detailing and materials, these have similar scale and traditional appearance, including hipped and gable roofs, gable features and dormer windows. The garages of some properties are integral to the main house, whereas others are freestanding. The freestanding garages are clearly subservient in scale to their host dwellings, also with hipped or gable roofs.
6. The appeal dwelling is characteristic of surrounding properties, set back from the street with a detached garage positioned closer to the front boundary of the property. The permitted changes to the dwelling would give it a more

contemporary appearance than at present, however it would retain its traditional form. Even with a raised ridge, it would be commensurate in scale with neighbouring properties.

7. The proposed remodelling of the garage would significantly increase its size and scale, bringing it closer to the front boundary and raising the ridge height substantially. These changes, combined with its proximity to the boundary of the appeal site, would result in it appearing overly prominent in the street scene, with boundary foliage providing only limited screening.
8. The materials of the proposed garage and creation of glazed gable features would match the approved changes to the host dwelling. However, due to its height and overall scale, the garage would appear out of proportion with the host dwelling, and not subservient to it.
9. I appreciate that the garage is intended to be different and eye-catching, and local and national policies do not preclude innovative design. However, they do require good quality design that respects and relates to local character. In this case, the shape and design of the proposed roof would be distinctly at odds with the more traditional roof designs of the host dwelling and surrounding area and would appear incongruous in this prominent position.
10. There are examples of unique, high-quality changes to properties in the locality. However, the photographs provided indicate that the overall style and design of those examples remains harmonious with the character of the surrounding area. In contrast, the height, shape and proportions of the proposed garage roof would not respect or reflect the character of the host dwelling or locality and would thus appear incongruous. It would not therefore respect the surrounding built environment and would harm the character and appearance of the area.
11. The proposed garage would be significantly taller than the approved garage roof modifications. It would also have a larger footprint. Furthermore, although the approved dormers to the front and rear of the garage would appear to be quite sizeable, the limited information provided shows that they would have a more traditional form. Consequently, despite having a slightly lower overall roof volume, the proposed garage would appear significantly more prominent in the street scene than the previously approved scheme. Therefore, the proposed garage remodelling would not appear more coherent with the street scene or host dwelling than the approved garage modifications. The alternative permitted scheme does not therefore weigh in favour of the appeal proposal.
12. The proposed front dormers would be similar to others in the area and would respect local character. The French doors would have limited visual impact. The remaining elements of the proposal, other than the garage, already benefit from planning permission. Consequently, these elements of the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Nevertheless, the lack of harm in this respect would not justify the harm from the proposed garage.
13. Overall, the proposed remodelling of the garage would harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would not comply with Policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan (2013), which expects all development to conserve local character and ensure scale, massing and layout respect the surrounding built environment.

14. Likewise, it would not follow the Solihull House Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2010), which outlines how proposals need to harmonise with the general character and appearance of the street scene and the particular style of the host dwelling. Similarly, it would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), which supports outstanding or innovative designs only as long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. The proposal would conflict with the Local Plan and national policy, and there are no material considerations that justify granting planning permission in conflict with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and agree with the reasoning. The proposed garage would harm the character and appearance of the area and conflict with local and national policy on design. While other elements of the proposal would not cause harm, these are neutral factors and there are no material considerations that justify the harm from the garage element of the scheme. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR