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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2024

**by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/24/3336872**

**48 Beechwood Avenue, Coventry CV5 6QG**

- 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 Robert Castledine against the decision of Coventry City Council.
  - The application Ref: PL/2023/0001835/HHA, dated 31 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 October 2023.
  - The development proposed is the installation of x10 PV panels to rear roof elevation.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of x10 PV panels to rear roof elevation at 48 Beechwood Avenue, Coventry CV5 6QG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: PL/2023/0001835/HHA, dated 31 August 2023, 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 shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans referenced Location Plan (dated 31/08/23) and Proposed Plan of Installation, and in accordance with the specifications contained within the document titled "Installation of PV solar panels to rear elevation" (dated August 2023).

### Procedural Matters

2. In my formal decision and banner above, I have used the description of development from the decision notice instead of the planning application form. This describes the proposed development more concisely, albeit I have removed wording which is not an act of development.
3. Since the decision was made by the Council, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published (19 December 2023). This does not materially change the planning policy context in respect of the main issue.
4. The Council has stated in the decision notice and in some parts of its officer's delegated report that the Coventry City Council Local Plan is dated 2016, yet the evidence provided, including the front cover of the local plan, shows it was adopted in December 2017. I have had regard to the adopted Coventry City Council Local Plan (2017) (LP) in reaching my decision.

## **Main Issue**

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property, as a non-designated heritage asset, and whether the character or appearance of the Earlsdon Conservation Area (ECA) would be preserved or enhanced.

## **Reasons**

6. The Earlsdon Conservation Area Appraisal (the ECCA) outlines the special interest of the ECA. The ECCA confirms that the appeal site is located within the Rochester Road locality where, overall, there is a high level of surviving original detailing on buildings. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal, I find the significance of the ECA is found on the historic plan form and evolution of the city, along with the overall variety and architectural quality of the buildings that the ECA possesses.
7. The appeal dwelling is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. The semi-detached pairing are constructed from a mixed palette of facing materials and red tiled roof. The dwellings include characterful projecting gables to the front side and rear, with a number of large chimney stacks. The varying gables results in a property with multiple roof slopes. The dwellings retain much of their original character and are a good example of an arts and crafts design. The dwellings are of heritage value, and I would consider them together to be a non-designated heritage asset. Overall, the dwellings contribute positively towards the character and appearance of the ECA.
8. The dwelling fronts onto, and is accessed from, Palmerston Road. To the rear, the dwelling backs onto Beechwood Avenue, between which is a reasonably deep garden. From Beechwood Avenue, the dwelling is well screened by mature landscaping. Surrounding properties are varied in their design, appearance, and age. Numerous properties in the wider area have solar panels installed on their rear or side roof slopes. Those on the rear roofs of dwellings on Rochester Road are particularly apparent from Beechwood Avenue.
9. The proposed solar panels would be sited on the rear roof slope of the dwelling, positioned between the projecting rear gable and the centre line of the properties. The mature landscaping on Beechwood Avenue would ensure that views of the solar panels would be largely screened. When approaching the site from the bend on Beechwood Avenue, the flank elevation and rear gable of the semi-detached pairing is prominent in view and creates a strong focal point to this short vista. However, the orientation the properties, means that the rear roof of the appeal dwelling is largely obscured from this view. Closer to the property, the rear roof slope does come into view, albeit only momentarily and from a small vantage point. These views are glimpsed through or over vegetation. This, together with the distance of the roof slope from the highway and positioning behind the prominent gables, would ensure that the solar panels would appear relatively inconspicuous.
10. The solar panels, due to their colour and reflectivity would contrast with the red tile roof. However, the dwelling has multiple roof slopes and the coverage of proposed solar panels would be limited to a single area of roof. The extent of roof coverage would not, on the whole, be significant. The solar panels would

be set back behind the projecting gable which would remain the dominant feature from the rear. Furthermore, as I have identified above, the degree of visibility from public areas would be limited. Together, these would ensure that the overall character and appearance of the building, and its semi-detached pairing, would not be adversely diminished by the solar panels.

11. I understand that existing solar panels in the area have been installed prior to the designation of the ECA, although I do not have sufficient evidence to conclude on this point. The ECCA and the Earlsdon Conservation Area Management Plan provide limited commentary on the installation of solar panels in the ECA, but do seek to limit visual clutter. Existing solar panels in the area, particularly those on Rochester Avenue, are prominent from Beechwood Avenue due to limited screening and their more exposed roof design. These are contextually different to the appeal proposals. Furthermore, together with the appeal proposals, they would not be viewed cumulatively to result in an unacceptable level of visual clutter in the ECA. In any event, I have considered the proposals on its individual merits and in accordance with the statutory requirement<sup>1</sup>.
12. For the above reasons, the development would not have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the host property, as a non-designated heritage asset, and would preserve the character and appearance of the ECA. Therefore, the proposed development accords with Policies DE1 and HE2 of the LP, and guidance contained within the Framework. Together, amongst other things, these require development to respect their surroundings, and for heritage assets to be protected and conserved.

### **Conditions**

13. I have imposed standard conditions relating to the commencement of development, and to require compliance with the submitted plans and documents for certainty, and in the interest of the character and appearance of the ECA.

### **Conclusion**

14. For the above reasons the appeal is allowed.

*D Cleary*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990