

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2024

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 4th July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/24/3342380

10 Station Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, B60 1PZ

- 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 Derek Mills against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01242/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a detached garden in the front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a detached garden in the front garden at 10 Station Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, B60 1PZ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/01242/FUL subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule to this decision.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a recently built detached dwelling of a distinctly contemporary design, being well set back from the highway. The dwelling was built with an integral garage which the appellant wishes to convert to an annex to accommodate an elderly relative¹.
4. A hard standing is formed immediately in front of the house, which was occupied by several vehicles during my visit. Otherwise, the front garden is largely lawned.
5. The site intended for the proposed garage was cleared of trees and vegetation when I visited. The extant hedge running along the site frontage has also been supplemented with plants and several pleached trees. I suspect that the recent planting was undertaken with a view to providing additional screening for the proposed garage.
6. Station Road, from its junction with Greenhill to the north almost to the railway bridge to the south, is fronted by detached dwellings of various ages and styles, set in a verdant setting established by trees and hedges. The building line on both sides of the road is not as rigid and formal as the Council appears to suggest.

¹ Although this does not form part of the proposal under consideration.

7. I saw several examples of garages built in front of dwellings most notably in front of the three dwellings immediately to the north of the junction of Laurel Bank Mews with Station Road and at No 11 Station Road on the opposite frontage.
8. I note too, the appellant's appendices relating to the various planning permissions granted for domestic garage development in front of dwellings in Station Road. All this suggests to me that the Council does not object to this form of development in the locality as a matter of principle, but that each case is determined on its merits.
9. I found that the proposed garage, which in terms of its scale and proposed materials is acceptably designed, would be very well screened by established greenery when approaching the site from the south. The garage would be in clear view when standing in front of the site and in short range views when approaching from the north. However, it would not be as visually exposed as other domestic garages in the street, and when the recent planting becomes more established this would provide an effective green screen, masking clear views of the garage.
10. I conclude that the proposal, if built, would sit acceptably in its visual context and would not harm the character or appearance its surroundings. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those provisions of policy BDP19 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and Policy BD2 of the Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan directed to achieving high quality design in development and to enhancing the character and distinctiveness of the local area. I also find no material conflict with the relevant aspects of the Council's design guidance².

Conditions

11. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions and agree that, in the interests of visual amenity, a condition in respect of external materials is necessary.
12. It is also necessary, in the interests of certainty, that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
13. In the particular circumstances of this case I also consider that an additional condition is necessary in respect of planting and landscaping in the interests of visual amenity.

Other matters

14. I have taken into consideration the objection raised by the Parish Council and have noted the references made by the main parties, for different reasons, to the two appeal decisions in respect of similar proposals to the north of the appeal site in St Catherine's Road. However, I have determined the appeal on its specific merits having regard to all the representations made and the provisions of the development plan.

² The Bromsgrove District High Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

15. No other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh those considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1). The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2). The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved unreferenced plans: the location plan, proposed site plan and the plan showing the proposed elevations and floor plans.
- 3). The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be those specified in the planning application form.
- 4). Prior to the commencement of development a plan and schedule of the trees, hedge and planting already present or recently carried out at the front of the site shall be submitted to the Council accompanied by a method statement for their future retention and maintenance for the Council's written approval. Any of the scheduled plants/trees which become diseased, die or are removed within 5 years of the commencement of development shall be replaced in the next planting season with plants/trees of a similar age and species.