



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2024

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/24/3339618

518 Haslucks Green Road, Majors Green, Worcestershire B90 1DS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Ash Ali against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application reference is 23/01156/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the addition of a third storey within the loft area of the dwelling, with associated alterations including raising the height of the roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the addition of a third storey within the loft area of the dwelling, with associated alterations including raising the height of the roof, at 518 Haslucks Green Road, Majors Green, Worcestershire B90 1DS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/01156/FUL, subject to the following 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 drawing nos:
 - 2320AA_P01A – Existing Floor Plan and Elevations
 - 2320AA_P02E – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - 2320AA_P03E – Proposed First and Second Floor Plan
 - 2320AA_P05E – Proposed Elevations
 - 2320AA_P06E – Existing and Proposed Street Scene
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building as approved by planning permission reference 23/00707/FUL.
 - 4) The windows to be installed on the first floor side elevations shall be fitted with obscure glazing and any opening lights shall be at high level and top hinged only. The obscure glass shall be maintained in the said window in perpetuity.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

2. In July 2024 the Government began consultation on proposed amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework"). The proposed changes do not have a significant bearing on the main issues in this appeal and it has not been necessary for me to seek comments on them from the main parties. Where I have referred to specific paragraphs of the Framework, the numbering used is that of the December 2023 version.

3. On 21 September 2023 the Council granted planning permission for a development at the appeal property described as the “addition of storey to existing bungalow, double storey forward extensions, and single storey rear extension” (LPA Ref: 23/00707/FUL) (“the extant permission”).
4. The appeal scheme was described on the planning application form as the “resubmission of application (Ref. No: 23/00707/FUL) to add third storey”. While the extant permission and this appeal proposal have much of their detail in common, as the proposal before me is not simply a resubmission of the earlier application that is not quite an accurate description of the proposed development. The proposed development is the addition of a third storey to the dwelling with associated alterations including raising the height of the roof, and I have used that wording in the banner heading and my formal decision above.
5. By the time I carried out my site visit, building work was well underway on the appeal property, presumably in the implementation of the extant permission. Much of its fabric, including most of the internal and external walls, had been removed to slab level, and the property was therefore to all intents and purposes unrecognisable from the bungalow shown in the “existing” plans submitted with the application and the photographs included in the appellant’s statement. My consideration of the impact of the appeal scheme is therefore made with reference to the altered dwelling as it would be allowed by the extant permission, rather than to the bungalow as it previously stood.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is at the corner of Haslucks Green Road and Cambria Close, within a largely residential area. The nearby dwellings are predominantly two-storey detached and semi-detached houses, though there are also several bungalows including a group on the opposite side of Haslucks Green Road from the appeal site. There is no single dominant housing style along Haslucks Green Road; while it would be stretching the point to say that no two neighbouring homes are alike, there is considerable variety in age, form and size, roof types, materials, and other details.
8. Until recently, the dwelling on the appeal site was a bungalow with a shallow-pitched gable roof and an attached garage. It was modest in scale and form and, so far as I can tell from the evidence before me, unassuming and perhaps even mundane in appearance. The extant permission allows front and rear extensions to the existing bungalow as well as the addition of a first floor. The front elevation as permitted will have twin front gables either side of a central glazed gabled porch, gabled side elevations, and Juliet balconies on the main rear elevation the large flat-roofed single-storey rear extension. It permission therefore represents a fairly dramatic transformation of the appeal property which, as I have described above, is already underway.
9. The Council’s officer report in respect of the extant permission noted that the Council’s 2019 *High Quality Design* SPD (“the SPD”) “requires extensions to be subordinate and avoid appearing as a central feature of the building”. It went on to comment that, notwithstanding the introduction of a first floor and

“somewhat central” window feature, “design features of the proposed extension have taken cues from neighbouring properties, [...] there are a variety of property styles within the existing streetscene, and [...] the application property is set back within its plot away from the highway edge”. The Council therefore concluded that “on balance the proposed design is considered to be acceptable”.

10. The proposed development which is before me would represent a further evolution of the extant permission. A third storey would be added within what would have been loft space providing two further bedrooms, a study and a “snug”. This would be accommodated by increasing the height and pitch of the roof; the box gable roof of the extant permission would be substituted for a flat-topped “crown” roof. There would be higher gables to the side elevations, as well as a series of rooflights across the rear.
11. The appearance of the front elevation would be distinctive when seen alongside its neighbours, but that has already been accepted when the extant permission was granted. The ridge height would be increased by 0.7m or so compared to the extant permission, and while there is clearly a point where incremental changes can lead to unacceptable harm, this would not be a disproportionate addition to the dwelling as permitted. No 518 is a relatively large plot compared to its immediate neighbours, so the dwelling would not appear unduly cramped on its site. The overall height of the dwelling would remain comparable to that of other two-storey dwellings nearby; it would be slightly taller than some, and slightly lower than others.
12. There would be additional rooflights at the rear of the dwelling compared to the extant permission, and some of these would be inset into the roof so as to provide full height windows for the rooms within. While that does not appear to be a common form of window within the surrounding area, their position set within the roof slope would mean that they would not be a prominent or intrusive feature. The dwelling would certainly have a distinctive appearance, but the character of Haslucks Green Road is one of diversity rather than consistency in the design and form of housing. It would not stand out as dominant because of its increased height and bulk, or incongruous because of the other changes proposed.
13. Taking all of this together, I conclude that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area. It would not conflict with Policies BDP1 or BDP19 of the 2017 Bromsgrove District Plan which together, and among other things, seek to ensure that development is well-designed and enhances the character and distinctiveness of the local area. For the same reasons, I find no conflict with the provisions of Chapter 12 of the Framework which seek to achieve well-designed places.

Conditions

14. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council having regard to the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (“the PPG”). I have made some minor changes to the ordering and proposed wording, in the interests of clarity and effectiveness.
15. In addition to the standard time limit condition (1), I have specified the approved plans so as to provide certainty (2). In order to protect the character and appearance of the area I have imposed a condition requiring external

surfaces of the permitted extension to be of materials matching the dwelling (3), though as the dwelling as altered by the extant permission would be quite different from its "original" form I have linked this condition to the materials in the extant permission. I have also reimposed the condition relating to windows on side elevations from the extant permission (4) as this is required to protect the privacy of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

Conclusion

16. There are no material considerations that indicate the application should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M Cryan

Inspector