
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2025 by M Long BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P4605/D/24/3356959

54 Willow Road, Birmingham B30 2AS

- 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 John Reglar against the decision of Birmingham City Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/04384/PA.
 - The development proposed is formation of habitable room in roofspace with rear dormer and gable window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. The Council's substantive concerns relate to the proposed rear dormer window and not the remainder of the proposal. I have defined the main issue on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed rear dormer window would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bournville Village Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The Bournville Village Conservation Area (the CA), in part, derives significance from its great architectural and historic interest, which includes connections to the Garden City Movement of the early 20th century. Willow Road has a high-quality residential character primarily comprised of traditional brick built, semi-detached pairs with balanced designs and a prevalence of arts and craft style architecture. While there is variation in the design of the houses within the CA, great attention is generally given to their decorative details which often include, amongst other things, string courses, decorative mouldings, stained and leaded glass, carved timber work, decorative ridge tiles and projecting eaves.
6. The appeal dwelling and 52 Willow Road (No 52) form an attractive semi-detached pair that broadly reflect one another's designs and share a consistency in their architectural details. At the site, is a two-storey extension set away from the shared boundary with No 52. This intervention differentiates the rear elevations of the

semi-detached pair. Even so, there remains much visual cohesiveness including in terms of the simple pitched profile of their main rear roof slopes, their distinctive first-floor windows which cut into the eaves and themselves have tiled pitches above, and their white-painted timber slats positioned at consistent intervals to the underside of the eaves. I observed that simple pitched roof forms, similar first-floor windows cutting into the eaves and timber slat detailing to the eaves are characteristic of many surrounding houses, giving order and consistency to the CA which contributes to its significance.

7. Due to its position within the roof slope, together with its differing roof form and misalignment relative to the first-floor window, the rear dormer would detract from the consistency of detailing on the host dwelling and the symmetry of the main roof across the semi-detached pair. In addition, when viewed alongside the two-storey extension, the rear dormer would result in an overly cluttered roofscape which would further unbalance the appearance of the semi-detached pair, detracting from the consistency in the original design features.
8. While the position of the dormer to the rear would limit public views, the significance of the CA does not only rely on views from the street. Like many nearby properties, the site has a long rear garden which, due to the curvature along Willow Road, allows for mutual views between surrounding properties. Due to its elevated height, the dormer would be visible in private views from numerous neighbouring gardens, where it would be seen as a discordant addition to the CA.
9. Even if a flat-roofed dormer design could, in some circumstances, be supported by the Bournville Village Conservation Area Design Guide, this particular proposal would conflict with its guidance setting out that dormer windows should be in keeping with the style and proportions of the existing house.
10. I acknowledge that there are other dormer extensions in the CA including a similar flat roofed dormer at 63 Willow Road, albeit the plans in that case indicate that the first-floor window below it also had a flat roofed profile in that instance. The dormer at 90 Linden Road is smaller than the appeal proposal and aligned with the first-floor window. The dormer at 52 Beech Road was granted planning permission over 20 years ago under a different policy context.
11. In any case, from my own observations during the site visit, such dormer extensions are not a prevailing feature in the vicinity of the site. These other limited examples are also not be seen in the same context as the rear of the appeal site. As such, they would not assimilate its discordant appearance amongst the distinctive unifying features of the host dwelling and its semi-detached counterpart, nor do they justify allowing a scheme which would not preserve the prevailing character or appearance of the CA.
12. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of CAs. For the reasons given above, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Due to the scale of the proposal, it would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, no substantive public benefits have been put

forward to outweigh the harm to the CA, and I apply great weight to the conservation of the CA in line with Paragraph 212 of the Framework.

13. I conclude that the proposed rear dormer window would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would be contrary to the Birmingham Development Plan (2017), specifically: Policy TP12 (Historic environment) which requires that great weight be given to the conservation of the City's heritage assets; and, Policy PG3 (Place making) which sets out that new development should reinforce or create a positive sense of place and local distinctiveness, with design that responds to site conditions and the local area context, including heritage assets.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Long

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR