



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2025 by A Khan BSc (Hons) MA MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/25/3358510

28 Belvedere Road, Coventry CV5 6PG

- 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 A Nagra against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/0001980/HHA.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Solar panels to the front and side elevation. CCTV cameras. Removal of a chimney to the rear elevation. Install new gutter and downpipe to front bay window. Single storey rear extension to rear / side elevation including alterations to existing garage roof. Installation of a conservation rooflight to the existing loft space.'
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. The solar panels and CCTV cameras have already been installed and planning permission is therefore sought retrospectively for this part of the development proposed. As the submitted plans accurately depict these elements of the development that have been carried out, I have considered the appeal based on the plans before me. I have however omitted the term 'retention' from the description of the proposal, as this is not an act of development.
4. The appeal site is in a conservation area, and I shall therefore pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of Earlsdon Conservation Area (ECA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

Conservation Area

6. The ECA was originally laid out as a 'garden village', which is predominantly characterised by late Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached and detached

properties set within a verdant setting. It reflects the development of early 20th century housing and is overall viewed as the best surviving example of late Victorian/Edwardian period suburb in Coventry.

7. Belvedere Road is a central part of the ECA, with 1920s housing that distinguishes it from earlier housing styles of nearby streets. The houses, often with gables but with a varied palette of materials and attractive detailing, were designed as high-status properties sited within large plots. The road is also valued for its mature street trees and proximity to Spencer Park, which contribute to its open, verdant and suburban character. The historic housing design, uniform rooflines and large frontages all contribute to the significance of the ECA.
8. The designation of the ECA was accompanied by an Article 4 Direction, removing certain permitted development rights, which includes the installation, alteration or replacement of microgeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment on a dwellinghouse or a block of flats. This ensures that such changes are subject to planning permission being obtained, in order to, as set out in the Article 4 Direction, protect the amenity of the conservation area. Whilst the appellant suggests that the installation of solar panels is not identified as a risk to the significance of the ECA either within the Appraisal or the Management Plan, the Article 4 Direction clearly indicates that this is something over which the Council wishes to retain a degree of control.
9. The appeal property is characterised by its traditional façade, with a mock Tudor front gable, red tiled roof, prominent chimney stacks, traditional wooden windows and decorative features. The spacing between buildings means that the appeal property is highly visible from the public realm, thereby enabling its interesting roofscape and architectural detailing to be appreciated. For these reasons, the appeal property contributes positively to the significance of the ECA.
10. Except for the solar panels, the Council raised no concerns with the rest of the appeal scheme regarding its effect on the character and appearance of the ECA. From my site observations and having regard to the available evidence, I see no reason to disagree. Therefore, my findings focus on the effect of the solar panels, which constitutes the main area of dispute between the appellant and the Council.
11. Due to their quantity, size and siting, the solar panels occupy a prominent and substantial part of the roof which harmfully contrasts with and masks the pleasant red tiled design and distinctive slopes of the appeal property. The extent of the coverage harmfully disrupts the roofscape, therefore significantly eroding the contribution this property makes to the significance of the ECA. Whilst the two trees either side of the property may provide partial screening in the summer months, this is not the case in winter when the property is fully exposed.
12. My attention has been drawn to other solar panels which have been installed both in proximity to the appeal site and within the wider ECA. In the absence of further details, I do not know whether these solar panels were installed prior to the designation of the ECA in October 2022 and the Article 4 Direction made for this area, as mentioned above. Consequently, I cannot be certain that these particular schemes represent a direct parallel to the scheme before me, and I have therefore ascribed them very limited weight.
13. Although the form of the solar panels follows their function to provide renewable energy and they are reversible, the extent of their presence on the front and side

elevations cause considerable and persistent harm to the character and appearance of the ECA as a whole which, it follows, is not preserved or enhanced.

14. Subsequently, the proposal is contrary to Policy DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan [Adopted 6 December 2017] (LP), which seeks to respect and enhance the surroundings by positively contributing to the character of an area as well as protecting the character of heritage assets. The proposal is also contrary to LP Policy HE2 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), which among other things require development proposals to preserve the significance of heritage assets, notably the special character of the area.

Heritage Balance

15. Paragraph 167 of the Framework states that significant weight should be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing domestic buildings, including solar panels where they do not already benefit from permitted development rights. Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, the policies set out in chapter 16 of the Framework should also be applied.
16. The solar panels unduly stand out as an incongruous addition to the roof of the appeal property and undermine the architectural uniformity of Belvedere Road, a defining feature of the ECA's significance. Therefore, the solar panels cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the ECA as a whole, to which I ascribe considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework (within chapter 16) requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. The appellant states that the solar panels are functional and domestic in nature, which aligns with the residential character of the area. While the ECA Appraisal does not oppose modern interventions, such changes must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The solar panels bring low carbon heating improvements to the appeal property and support its energy efficiency. These can be regarded as public benefits, and are ascribed significant weight, in accordance with the provisions of the Framework. However, the presented public benefits are outweighed by the less than substantial harm which the appeal proposal causes to the significance of the ECA.

Other Matters

18. The appellant cites LP Policy EM3, which promotes and encourages renewable energy technologies, however this is provided that any significant adverse impacts can be mitigated and the proposal is consistent with any other relevant policies in the LP. LP Policy DE1 sets out the key principles that all development will be expected to meet. Although the appeal scheme is proactive in responding to climate change and adopts sustainable principles in this regard, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the historic built environment. As the appeal scheme does not attempt to mitigate this significant adverse impact, it is therefore neither consistent with LP Policies DE1 nor EM3.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

A Khan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

S Edwards

INSPECTOR