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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 August 2025

**by Rachel Hall BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 17 September 2025.**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/W/25/3367013**

**35 High Street, Honeybourne, Worcs WR11 7PQ**

- 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 Graham Fancutt against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
  - The application Ref is W/24/02413/FUL.
  - The development proposed is conversion of garage to 2-bedroom bungalow.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development above which is taken from the original planning application form, the proposal considered by the Council was described as: conversion and extension of garage to form 2-bedroom self-build bungalow. That is consistent with the proposal as described on the appeal form. Therefore, the appeal is determined on that basis.
3. In light of the site's proximity to a grade II listed building I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

### Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on
  - the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, with particular regard to whether the proposal would preserve the special interest and setting of the grade II listed building known as 33 and 35, High Street; and
  - highway safety, with particular regard to parking provision.

### Reasons

#### *Character and appearance*

5. No 35 comprises part of a grade II listed building known as 33 and 35, High Street (List Entry Number 1350022) (the listed building). This is described as two houses and a shop, partially clad in ashlar with a tiled roof. Albeit the listing description is not a definition of a building's heritage significance. It instead falls to the decision maker to determine the features that are of significance and relevant to the determination of a particular proposal, in light of the available evidence.

6. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the significance of the listed building is primarily derived from its traditional building form and materials, combined with the historic association of its role within a rural village. From the appeal site, there remains visibility of the traditional form and materials of the earlier parts of the buildings. This includes the ashlar cladding at first floor level, and the tiled, pitched roofs. It is clear that there have been various later additions to the listed building, including a modern flat roof extension to the rear of No 35, as well as the appeal garage building. Therefore, it is important to consider whether additional change would further detract from its historic interest.
7. The appeal site is in an area where the density of housing is varied. On High Street, houses generally appear to be situated within reasonably spacious plots, many with good sized front drives and gardens. Adjacent development on Maple Close is relatively high density. However, it comprises purpose-built housing with well-defined private garden space and separate parking areas. It thus does not appear cramped. Consequently, despite some relatively high-density development, the area retains the character of a rural village.
8. The existing garage provides storage for No 35 and, although a modern design, it appears connected with the use of No 35. Combined with the existing garden immediately to the rear of No 35, there is therefore a good sense of space behind No 35. That is visible from the entrance to Maple Close and provides a welcome sense of separation between the listed building and newer houses to the rear of the site.
9. However, the proposal would result in the land to the rear of No 35 being subdivided to create a separate plot for the occupants of the proposed converted garage. The proposal includes the provision of two parking spaces for the occupants of No 35, with vehicular access from Maple Close. This would occupy part of its existing garden. In addition, an adjacent parking area is proposed for the occupants of the converted garage, also accessed from Maple Close. Although some hardstanding is already in place adjacent to the garage, the proximity of these off-street parking areas to one another would appear cramped and car heavy. Consequently, the sense of space that the existing garden provides would be considerably diminished.
10. The quantum of outside space associated with the converted garage and No 35 is said to exceed policy requirements. Also, high density development can be an appropriate solution depending on site context. Nevertheless, the proposed garage conversion to an independent dwelling would likely result in a noticeable increase in comings and goings here. In addition, given the confined nature of the plot, increased residential paraphernalia would likely be visible around the building, adding further clutter. This would comprise a marked change relative to its existing use as a garage for No 35.
11. Consequently, and in light of its visual prominence from the entrance to Maple Close, this greater intensity of use would appear unacceptably constrained and contrived. In combination with the domination of the appeal site with vehicles and hardstanding, the proposal would further detract from the ability to appreciate the traditional features of the listed building. This would apply whether or not the land on which the garage is situated was historically part of the grounds of the listed building.

12. Therefore, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the changes are confined to the grounds to the rear of No 35, the harm would be less than substantial but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
13. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the Council confirms that it is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with a supply of just 1.1 years. Accordingly, although a small contribution the provision of one house is a public benefit which attracts significant weight. There would also be small economic benefits associated with the conversion of the building and from spending in the local and wider economy associated with its subsequent occupation. Nonetheless, in this instance, the benefits arising from the provision of a single dwelling do not amount to clear and convincing justification for the harm to the setting of the listed building. Consequently, this would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the Framework.
14. Therefore, the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. As such, it would conflict with Policy SWDP21 and SWDP25 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (February 2016) (Local Plan). Together these generally seek to ensure that proposals achieve good design, taking into account surrounding character. In addition, it would be contrary to Policy SWDP6 of the Local Plan. This generally seeks to ensure proposals conserve and enhance heritage assets. It would also conflict with Policy SWDP24 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure proposals affecting heritage assets are assessed in line with the Framework, along with other legislation and guidance. It would further conflict with Policy H4 of the Honeybourne Neighbourhood Development Plan (April 2020) (Neighbourhood Plan), which also seeks that proposals are designed to respect or improve local character.

#### *Highway safety*

15. The proposal was submitted with provision for one parking space for the future occupants of the converted garage. The Council considers that one parking space is insufficient for a two bedroomed house, with reference to the parking requirements set out in Worcestershire County Council's Highways Design Guide (Design Guide). That specifies that two parking spaces would be required for a development of this scale. I note that the appellant submits that the appeal site could accommodate parking for two vehicles. A plan was submitted during the course of the appeal to that effect. Nonetheless, that shows a very tight parking arrangement to the extent that it does not appear feasible for a second vehicle to park on that space, allowing for manoeuvring space. No substantive evidence indicates otherwise. Therefore, the proposal would likely lead to on-street parking in the vicinity of the appeal site.
16. Nevertheless, some vehicles already park on High Street. Moreover, the proposed two-bedroom dwelling is unlikely to give rise to an increase in on-street parking to the extent that it would result in highway safety concerns. No robust evidence indicates otherwise.

17. Accordingly, the effect of the proposal on highway safety would be acceptable, with particular regard to parking provision. As such, although not in accordance with the Design Guide on this main issue, the proposal would accord with Policy SWDP4 of the Local Plan. Amongst other matters this seeks to ensure proposals are designed with consideration for road safety.

### **Other Matters**

18. The proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policies SWDP6, SWDP21, SWDP24 and SWDP25 and Policy H4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Given the importance of achieving good design and protecting the historic environment, the proposal would not accord with the development plan when considered as a whole. The harm from conflict with these policies carries significant weight.
19. The Council can currently only demonstrate a 1.1-year housing land supply which amounts to a significant shortfall. Accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development under Framework paragraph 11.d)ii applies. The proposal would deliver one additional bungalow in an accessible location within the settlement boundary. Whilst an incremental increase it nonetheless attracts significant weight in the context of the Council's housing land supply shortage.
20. Construction of the dwelling would provide short term benefits to the local and wider economy. The occupants would be likely to stimulate consumer spending, boost local labour supply and help to support local services, which would all constitute modest benefits in social and economic terms. That the development has been found to be acceptable with respect to matters such as drainage, quantum of private garden space, and the living conditions of neighbours, are neutral considerations.
21. Nevertheless, the Framework identifies good design as a key aspect of sustainable development and that great weight is given to a heritage asset's conservation. Accordingly, the support for new housing in the Framework is not at the expense of ensuring that all development is appropriately designed and integrates suitably with its surroundings. Therefore, despite the significant benefit arising from the contribution of a single dwelling, alongside other modest benefits, I consider the harm to the listed building, and the character and appearance of the area would be of considerably greater significance.
22. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the appeal scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the combination of its benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the proposal does not represent sustainable development.

### **Conclusion**

23. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. For the reasons given, the proposal is unacceptable, and the appeal should be dismissed.

*Rachel Hall*

INSPECTOR