



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2022

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/22/3304190

Damson Cottage, Withington, Shrewsbury SY4 4QA

- 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 and Mrs N Williams against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01784/FUL, dated 8 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is formation of first floor accommodation above garage to include raising the roof height, insertion of rooflights. Construction of ground floor link.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site occupies a prominent location on the corner of Sunnyfields and the unnamed lane (the 'lane'). It is the last property of the village of Withington on this side of the lane. Beyond the site, to the east, lie fields and open countryside. There are a mix of properties of different designs, sizes and ages in the village, and despite the more modern properties in the nearby Sunnyfields, the village retains a traditional character and appearance.
4. The host property comprises a traditional two storey brick and tile cottage with a single storey attached outbuilding that has been converted to living accommodation (the 'converted outbuilding') and which now contains the front door. Next to this is a single storey, detached, pitched roof garage, the subject of this appeal. The property positively contributes to the character and appearance of the village.
5. Due to its orientation, the property is aligned parallel to the lane, such that the cottage, the converted outbuilding and garage approximately follow the same building line, and are exposed to public view. The eaves and roof ridge of the garage are much the same height as the converted outbuilding, both of which are substantially lower than the main cottage. Due to its lower height and narrow gable end that faces the lane, the garage is a diminutive building that is clearly subservient to the cottage.
6. The proposed development would involve adding a first floor to the garage to provide a bathroom and 2 bedrooms. The walls would be raised, and the

resulting raised eaves would be substantially higher than the eaves of the adjacent converted outbuilding. The roof ridge would also be raised by some 1.2 metres. Consequently, the altered garage would stand significantly taller than the adjacent converted outbuilding. Its raised roof would be only about 0.4 metres lower than the ridge on the main cottage. This would affect the visual relationship between the buildings.

7. The newly created front gable would be infilled with full height glazing across the entire top floor above the garage doors, not just from the eaves. There would be a Juliette-style glazed balcony across the glazed gable. Doors and windows would be dark aluminium. A new double garage door would be inserted to replace the two separate single doors and central brick pillar. These design features, together with the overall increase in height, would disrupt the proportions of the garage building, making it appear wider and bigger than the gable end of the cottage. Consequently, the resulting increased height, size, bulk of the proposal would visually compete with the main cottage and converted outbuilding to appear the dominant element, and no longer subservient. Whilst the garage is set back a good distance from the lane, it is still on the same building line so there would be no further set-back to offset the prominence.
8. The proposal has embraced a contemporary design. However, the proposed full height glazing and double garage door would see the loss of architectural features such as the rounded brick arches over the two single garage doors, and the top-loading door in the gable with its brick arches. The loss of these features would in turn see the loss of the traditional character and appearance of the building. As the proposal would harm the garage building and the host property, which are an integral part of the village, it follows that the contribution that the garage building and host property would make to the area would be diminished as a result of the proposal.
9. It is not clear what material 'non-combustible' cladding is, although I note the Council refer to it as uPVC, which would not be a traditional material. I saw timber cladding has been used to totally clad a number of outbuildings in the village, but cladding is not a prevailing design feature. The proposed partial use of a 'cladding' on the raised garage walls above the old eaves line would serve to accentuate the enlargement of the building and change in proportions, especially on the long east elevation that would be viewed from the countryside and lane to the east.
10. Due to the property's prominent corner location, the changes to the garage and the resulting change to the overall elevation of the property would be clearly seen as one approached it from the village. Approaching the property from the east along the lane, the changes and height increase would be noticeable over the hedge and from the field gate, although the full elevation of the property would not come into view until almost level with the garage due to the curve in the road.
11. The proposal would also see the garage linked to the house by a narrow single-storey link with a glazed roof. This would run along the rear of the converted outbuilding structure. However, only a full height glazed door would be visible from the driveway and lane and this would be set a substantial distance back from the front of the garage. As such it would be a low-key addition that would have minimal effect on the character and appearance of the property.

12. Drawing all the above points together, the proposed upward extension of the garage, by reason of its size, bulk, design and materials coupled with the loss of a number of architectural features, would be a visually discordant addition to the property that would not be in keeping with the prevailing local vernacular and would not be sufficiently subservient. Consequently, the proposal would materially alter the building and cause unacceptable harm to its character and appearance, to that of the host property and to the surrounding area.
13. According to the Council the appeal property is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). There is limited evidence before me regarding this, and I have not been presented with any 'local list' or list of NHDAs to confirm any special attributes or its designation. As the appellant suggests, the building's age and local vernacular may be the reason for the Council's assertion. Even if the building was a NDHA, Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that the effect of the proposal on the significance of the NDHA is taken into account as part of a balanced judgement. As described above, the proposed development would see the loss of architectural features and harm the character and appearance of the property, and hence its significance. I am sympathetic to the appellant's desire to improve the living accommodation for his growing family. However, this is not a public benefit nor is it sufficient to outweigh allowing harmful development.
14. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS6 and SAMDev¹ Policy MD2. Collectively these policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure development responds positively to the visual appearance of a place, is of an appropriate scale and design taking into account local character and context and reflects local architectural design and details.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR

¹ Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan