

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Amie Holden	Two storey side extension. Demolition of workshop and modern garage. Removal and excavation of existing hard surface and replace with garden area with tiered retaining walls. 9 Parish Hill, Bournheath, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 9JH	11.11.2020	20/01129/FUL

Councillor May has requested this application be considered by the Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated powers

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **REFUSED**

Consultations

Highways

No objection - The property has the ability to park 3 plus vehicles on site

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection.

Condition requested to ensure a porous surface is retained in perpetuity.

Node (Conservation Consultant)

The local importance of the nailing industry is recognised within local planning policy BDP20.12. As such the house and workshop are non-designated heritage assets as defined by National Planning Practice Guidance paragraph 18a-039, with a degree of heritage significance that merits consideration in determining the application. Decision makers are advised that the significance of the assets is low, balancing the importance of the buildings' historic function to local distinctiveness, against the relatively extensive alterations of the structures, and the impacts of 20th century development on the ability to understand their historic function. Further, the degree of harm represents a total loss of the significance of the workshop; however, it is recognised that the cottage itself will remain, albeit in an extended form. The submitted structural survey, and its conclusions as to the low potential for the workshop's restoration, should be weighed in decision making, accordingly. Should the local planning authority deem the survey's methodology sound, officers are advised that the loss of the workshop would be regrettable but permissible under prevailing legislation and policy for heritage assets.

Worcestershire Archive And Archaeological Service

This application has been checked against Worcestershire's Historic Environment Record and is considered to affect an undesignated heritage asset recorded on the HER. WSM73539 "Small late 19th century garage/workshop associated with the nail industry. Brick with corrugated tin or iron roof." The nail industry is an important part of the heritage of the Bromsgrove area, therefore, whilst the building is of low significance, it still makes a contribution to the understanding of that industry.

Whilst there is no objection to the proposed development, should the LPA be minded to grant permission, a Level 1 (as defined by Historic England) Historic Building Record should be undertaken and submitted to the HER

Bournheath Parish Council

No objection

The appearance of the property would be much improved, as the old nail shop is falling down and the existing garage is not in keeping with the cottage. The gravel areas are good for drainage but members would like to see some measures to ensure that gravel is not washed into the road during heavy storms.

Public notifications

4 neighbour letters were sent 08.10.2020 and expired 01.11.2020

A site notice was posted on 06.10.2020 and expired on 30.10.2020

No response received

Councillor May

Requested the application be considered by the Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated powers.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP4 Green Belt

BDP15 Rural Renaissance

BDP16 Sustainable Transport

BDP19 High Quality Design

BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment

Others

Bromsgrove High Quality Design SPD

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Relevant Planning History

BU/271/1973	Replace cottage with bungalow	Approved	13.05.1973
B/1994/0364	Extensions and alterations	Approved	18.07.1994

Assessment of Proposal

Application Site and Proposal

The application site is located on the north-eastern side of Parish Hill in Bournheath, in the designated Green Belt and outside of the defined village settlement boundary. It comprises an existing cottage set back from the highway behind a detached workshop, with a modern, flat roof garage attached to the south-western elevation of the dwelling. There is a very small amenity area to the rear of the existing dwelling with the majority of the remainder of the site being a tarmac driveway. The site is bound to the north-east and

south-west by dwellings and to the south-east by a field. There is a relatively steep gradient to the road with the land sloping downwards by approximately 3 metres from south-west to north-east. The existing ground has been built up against the side wall of the house and the workshop, meaning that the ground floor of the existing dwelling and the workshop are partly obscured from view and that the attached flat roof garage sits at first floor level with an eaves height higher than the eaves of the existing dwelling.

This proposal seeks permission to construct a two storey side extension, to demolish the workshop and modern garage, and to remove and excavate the existing hard surface which would be replaced with a tiered grassed garden area comprising retaining walls. The two storey extension would create enlarged living space on the ground floor and two more bedrooms and a study at first floor.

Conservation

The existing dwelling was originally constructed as a very modest one bedroom nailer's cottage with the original principal elevation forming what is now considered to be the existing rear elevation of the cottage. In front of the nailer's cottage stands a brick built nailer's workshop with a corrugated roof. Both buildings are thought to date back to the 19th century and are considered non-designated heritage assets. Whilst not listed nationally, buildings relating to the nailing industry are recognised in policy BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan as being Heritage Assets of local importance due to their notability in terms of local character and distinctiveness. The nailer's workshop is listed as an undesignated heritage asset on the Historic Environment Record.

A Structural Engineers report has been provided in support of the application which states that the building would require extensive repairs and reconstruction to provide structural stability. The report recommends the building be demolished.

A heritage statement submitted with the application identifies that the workshop has been extensively altered, partially rebuilt, re-roofed and that the principal openings have been blocked and new large openings created. The building retains little historic interest. The raised car parking area also screens one elevation of the structure.

For the reasons above the Conservation Officer is in agreement that the nailer's cottage is of low significance and acknowledges the low potential for restoration of the building.

Policy BDP20 seeks to enhance and retain non-designated Heritage Assets and is consistent with paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that a balanced judgment should be applied to applications that directly or indirectly affect heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss as a result of the proposed development and the significance of the heritage asset.

As the workshop is neither structurally viable nor retains any significant features related to its original function, in this instance its loss would be considered acceptable, subject to a condition requiring an historic building record being undertaken. It is recognised that the nailer's cottage would remain, albeit in an altered and extended form.

Originally number 11 Parish Hill was a cottage attached to number 9 where the modern garage currently sits. In the 1970s the cottage forming number 11 was demolished and

rebuilt higher up the hill as a bungalow. A modern garage was then erected as an extension in its place. This garage originally fell within the ownership of number 11 but over time has become part of the ownership of number 9.

In 1994 the nailer's cottage was extended by virtue of a two storey front gable projection to provide a second bedroom at first floor and extended living accommodation at ground floor. It is considered that the character of the original nailer's cottage has already been lost through these extensions and alterations.

Green Belt

The development of new buildings in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate, except for a number of exceptions as outlined in Policy BDP4 of the District Plan and paragraph 145 of the NPPF. Criteria 4 of Policy BDP4 sets out that extensions are permitted to existing residential dwellings either up to a maximum of 40% increase of the original dwelling, or, an increase of up to a maximum total floor space of 140m² (original dwelling plus extensions) provided that this scale of development has no adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This policy is compliant with the NPPF. The NPPF defines 'original building' as 'a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally'.

The Officer's report for the 1994 extensions stated that an additional floor area of 10m² would be created, however, the plans appear to show the floor area created to have been greater than this. As the 1994 plans can no longer be scaled your Officer has deducted 10 square metres from the floor area of the existing plans submitted with the application to obtain an approximate original floor area for the dwelling. Although the workshop is proposed to be demolished, it is still classed as an 'original' building in close proximity of the dwelling, therefore its floor area of 32.5m² has been included when determining the original base figure from which to calculate the percentage increase from. The High Quality Design SPD states that a 40% increase can be calculated as either floor space or volume and that this should be measured externally, therefore the ground **and** first floor areas have been calculated. On this basis and from measuring the submitted plans your Officer considers the original floor area was 112.5m². The total floor area (ground and first floor) of the proposed extension would be 85.8m². This combined with the existing extension (of a minimum of) 10m² would still equate to an increase of 85.1%. The existing non-original attached garage has not been included in the calculations due to the fact it is proposed to be removed as part of the proposal.

Notwithstanding the above, where the original dwelling was of a modest size, a more appropriate approach would be to apply the 140m² limit. Again, this approach is based on floor area, not just ground floor footprint. Using this approach, the resultant dwelling would have a total floor area of 175.8m². As the built form on site already exceeds the 140m² limit it is necessary to compare this with the proposed built form. The proposal would result in an increase in floor area on the site of 22.4m² when compared with the existing built form on site.

In considering proportionality, it is also necessary to consider the form, bulk, height and overall scale of the enlarged building not just the floorspace and size calculations. Given its scale and siting, the proposed side extension would add substantial bulk and would dominate the original building which has already been extended. As such, the size of the

proposed development would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, thus resulting in inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Openness refers to the absence of development on land and has a visual and spatial element. Openness is a separate issue from the effect of a development on the character and appearance of an area.

The Agent maintains there will be a net gain to the openness of the Green Belt, however, this is based on comparing just the footprint of the buildings to be demolished and the ground floor only of the proposed extension. A hard surface area comparison has also been provided by the Agent which shows the proposed development would reduce the level of hard surfacing by 103.4m² also contributing to the openness of the Green Belt. Having visited the site, your Officer notes that the area marked as slabbed on the existing site plan is grassed, therefore this figure is considered to be approximately 44m², a smaller net gain.

It is recognised that the removal of the existing workshop and garage along with the hardstanding would noticeably reduce the footprint/coverage of development on the site. However, this does not take into account the height and mass created by the two storey extension which would be fully exposed due to its siting, the demolition of the workshop and the proposed excavation works to make the ground level the same as the existing cottage. The garden area would also still involve the introduction of tiered retaining walls. Given its height, mass and siting the proposed extension would undoubtedly have a greater spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared to the existing situation.

For the above reasons, the development would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would therefore conflict with the aims of Policies BDP1 (Sustainable Development Principles), BDP4 (Green Belt) and BDP15 (Rural Renaissance) of the District Plan and the NPPF.

Character and Design

Policy BDP19 of the District Plan requires development to follow the guidance within the High Quality Design SPD and the NPPF to achieve good design. The SPD requires side extensions to reflect the proportions of the original building. They should appear smaller and less substantial scale than the main building and should be clearly set down from the ridge of the dwelling and set back from the principal elevation.

The proposed extension has been designed to reflect the existing gable frontage of the dwelling with the intention of providing a symmetrical appearance. Whilst the proposed gable is narrower than the existing gable it protrudes forward of the original building line to be in line with the existing projection and is not set down from the ridge line. As such, the proposed extension would, by virtue of its design and scale, have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling.

Residential Amenity

The proposed extension does not raise any concerns in respect of residential amenity by virtue of its siting and the positioning of the proposed windows. Number 7 Parish Hill is on the opposite side of the house to the extension and number 11 Parish Hill is some 17 metres away from the proposed extension and 5.4 metres higher.

Highways

The Highways Officer considers there to be sufficient space for the parking of three vehicles on site and therefore has no objection to the proposal.

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was submitted with the application which found the buildings to have negligible suitability for roosting bats and the overall site of low value for foraging or commuting bats.

Very Special Circumstances

The development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances. Moreover, the proposal would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Paragraph 144 of the NPPF attributes substantial weight to this harm. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. This is a high hurdle for a development proposal to overcome.

The applicant has put forward a case for very special circumstances. The first point in case is the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The applicant maintains that due to the raised ground levels, the existing flat roof of the garage exceeds the height of the eaves of the existing dwelling, therefore the additional bulk of the roof of the extension would be the only resulting impact. However, due to the raised land levels, the garage currently appears as a single storey flat roof building when viewed from the public vantage point of Parish Hill. The proposed works would fully expose a two storey extension with a pitched roof which has a greater footprint than the existing flat roof garage.

In addition, to the above the applicant maintains that a large proportion of the new extension would be constructed at a subterranean level given the existing ground levels of the site. However, the proposal is to excavate the existing land levels to fully expose the new extension, therefore no part of the extension would be subterranean.

The second point relates to the improvement of the visual amenity of the site through the demolition of a dilapidated workshop and an incongruous flat roof modern garage, both of which obstruct views of an attractive cottage. The workshop is recognised as being in a state of disrepair, nonetheless it is still recognised as a non-designated heritage asset and its loss, whilst accepted for the reasons stated above, should not be viewed as a benefit of the scheme. Policy BDP1 states that regard should be had to the impact on

visual amenity. The proposed works would improve the visual amenity of the site through the removal of a significant amount of hard standing and replacing it with a more natural grassed area, and the removal of an obstructive, unsympathetic flat roofed garage, however, the proposed extension would still have a greater visual and spatial impact on the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of its scale, height and massing and would not appear subservient to the existing dwelling. Furthermore, it is also noted that the introduction of a grassed area, would still comprise tiered retaining walls, thus would not appear entirely natural. For this reason, limited weight is attributed to these benefits.

The final point relates to the structural issues on the site. The ground floor side wall of the dwelling and the workshop are below external ground level and have major damp issues. A damp proofing specialist has advised that the most successful way to remedy the damp issue would be to demolish the garage and excavate the external ground out at the side of the house down to that of the existing dwelling to allow for a chemically injected damp proof course to be installed. The structural concerns in respect of the workshop have been considered and the demolition accepted earlier in this report, however, whilst excavation may be required it is not accepted that a disproportionate extension is also required to remedy the structural issue or to ensure that the dwelling is retained in the future. As such, limited weight is attributed to this benefit.

The desire to create a larger family home is acknowledged, however, this is an argument that can be easily repeated and is thus not 'very special'. Furthermore, personal circumstances are rarely a material planning consideration and the personal circumstances of the owner or the site ownership could change. It is considered that the necessary works could be carried out to remedy structural issues, the visual amenity of the site improved, and extra living space created through a more subservient and proportionate addition.

The proposal would cause no harm to residential amenity or protected species. A lack of harm carries neutral weight in the planning balance.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the benefits advanced in favour of the proposal would carry limited weight in its favour. In conclusion and on balance, the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm and the harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling is not clearly outweighed by the other considerations put forward and therefore the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposed development do not exist. As such, the development would conflict with policies within the District Plan and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be Refused

Reasons for Refusal

- 1) The proposed extension in addition to the existing extension would constitute a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling. Disproportionate additions are by

definition inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Given its height, mass and siting the proposed extension would undoubtedly have a greater spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared to the existing situation. It is not considered that the very special circumstances put forward clearly outweigh the substantial weight given to the harm identified. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy BDP4.4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

- 2) The proposed extension would not, by virtue of its design and scale, appear subordinate and would thus have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling. As such, the development would be contrary to Policy BDP19 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the Bromsgrove High Quality Design SPD.

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