

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Proposed Development</b>	<b>Expiry Date</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Ms W Richmond	Side extension to Bungalow 8 Forest Close, Lickey End Bromsgrove B60 1JU	23/07/2022	22/0604/FUL

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be **REFUSED**

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

### **Consultations**

No consultations required

### **Publicity**

Four neighbours notified by letter of 29/06/22. Expired 23/07/2022. No comments received

### **Councillor Hunter**

Officers have advised that it does not comply with the High-Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). However, I understand that Tyler Parkes (a planning consultant commissioned by the applicant) have undertaken an assessment of the application in relation to the policy and come to a different view and find that it is in fact compliant. I believe it would be helpful for the planning committee to scrutinise the two views and reach a decision based on a full assessment of all the evidence.

You will also be aware of the provisions within BDP10 of the Bromsgrove Local Plan which discusses the need to encourage the provision of suitable homes for elderly people such that they can maintain their independence in the community. If it turns out that Tyler Parkes are incorrect in their assessment, then these objectives would be in conflict with the SPD in this case. As both are material considerations I think it would be helpful for the planning committee to determine which provisions should carry greater weight in the decision making process.

### **Relevant Policies**

#### **Bromsgrove District Plan**

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP10 Homes for the Elderly

BDP19 High Quality Design

#### **Others**

Bromsgrove High Quality Design SPD

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

**Relevant Planning History** – None

## **Assessment of the Proposal**

Forest Close is a relatively short cul-de-sac road accessed from Alcester Road, the B4096. The application site lies adjacent to a bend broadly halfway along Forest Close. The property is a detached bungalow with a front elevation fronting the north side of the west-east alignment of Forest Road with a side elevation fronting the north-south stretch of the Close. The bungalow is at the end row of four bungalows and is set at a significantly higher level than the adjacent north-south part Forest Close. The open plan, front and side sloping and terraced garden provides a spacious open aspect to this corner.

It is proposed to construct a single storey side extension 5 metres wide with an additional bay window 0.6 metres deep with the proposed ridge the same height as the existing ridge, at 5 metres high, and to the full depth of the bungalow. The extension would provide two bedrooms. The applicant has referred to the need for the extension to provide additional accommodation for her mother-in-law who is elderly and unable to live on her own due to mobility issues.

At its nearest point the proposed west side elevation would be 2.8 metres from the back edge of the footway (2.1 metres from the bay window) of the adjacent north/south part of Forest Close. The applicant was requested but did not produce a section through the site. However, it is estimated that the proposed side gable end would be around 5.7 metres and the south-west corner eaves 4 metres above the adjoining part of the current sloping and terraced garden. There is common ground with the agent that this reflects the fall of the ground. Moreover, the forward alignment of the extension would appear more prominent if a level lawn and under floor storage is created, which the agent has indicated would be part of the design, albeit not shown on the proposed plans.

Assessing these dimensions, it is considered that the proposed extension rather than being subordinate in scale and would appear to more dominant and more prominent than, and would be a competing feature to, the existing dwelling. The Bromsgrove District High Quality Design SPD is anchored into the BDP19 of the adopted local plan and was the subject of public participation set out what the Council considers is good design. Thus, in paragraph 3.3.1 it states that subordination of side extensions can be achieved where the extension is clearly set down from the ridge and set back from the principal elevation. There are no exceptions for bungalows and given the nature of the levels to the side the proposed extension would appear to be more dominant and prominent.

Moreover, the alignment of the main part of the proposed side elevation would be 3.9 metres in front of the alignment of main part of the front elevation of no. 10, the adjacent house, to the north which is typical of the building line of the houses on the east side of the north/south part of Forest Close. Therefore, the width of the proposed extension would conflict with the guidelines in paragraph 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 of the SPD in that the proposed side elevation and would not respect of the building line of the north/south orientated stretch of the cul-de-sac of Forest Close.

Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed side extension would be unacceptably dominant and prominent creating a visual pinch point in this part of the

in the street scene and resulting in the loss of the currently spacious soft landscaped corner between these two stretches of the Close. This is a locally distinctive feature that is part of the character of the Close and its loss would be contrary to paragraph 3.1.11 of the SPD. Moreover, this design which would not reflect the pattern of spacing of buildings and local features would not enhance and strengthen the local distinctiveness of the area contrary to paragraph 3.1.11. It is noteworthy that paragraph 3.1.11 states that the impact on the street scene must be considered and that paragraph 3.1.11 ii) states that an extension must not normally project forward of an elevation fronting the public domain. Since this design would not follow the SPD guidance and would not retain the character and distinctiveness of the area it would not accord with policy BDP19 a) and e).

Turning to the issue of the impact on living condition of occupants it is considered that a bay window relatively close to the side footway would not create a defensible space buffer contrary to paragraph 3.3.4 of the SPD.

Tyler Parks the planning consultant commissioned by the applicant make the various substantive arguments which are summarised below in plain text, along with the Officers comments in italics.

1. The proposed floorspace would be used for a dependant elderly relative and would need to have level access.  
*The officers' view is that a level floor space can be achieved by an alternative design such as a single storey rear extension and such alternatives have been suggested. Moreover, since the bungalow is raised above the level of the adjoining footways the existing access to it is already not level.*
2. There is policy support for elderly and special needs in Policy BDP10 and for adaptations on BDP19(j) relating to accessibility and (m) relating to adaptability  
*Policy BDP10 is not applicable here given the scheme does not relate to the provision of a new dwelling for the elderly. Notwithstanding this, both cited policies do not set aside the need to demonstrate good design*
3. The SPD, paragraph 3.1.6, relating to extensions, generally does not require extensions to be smaller scale but keeping width, bulk and height in proportion.  
*This paragraph needs to be read in the context and overlooks the heading to the same paragraph - 'Extensions must be subordinate'*
4. The guidance on side extension which focusses on subordination differs from the general guidance and it also states that each application is taken on its own merits.  
*Given the design is for a side extension considerable weight needs to be given to the specific design guidelines which emphasise the need for extensions to be smaller in scale*
5. The proposed extension represents a modest (43%) increase in the footprint of the bungalow. It would be better design to have a 'seamless' extension which carries through the building width, ridge and eaves heights.  
*The main thrust of SPD and policy BDP 19 is that extensions should be smaller in scale, (not just footprint) and not be unduly prominent thereby retaining character*

*and local distinctiveness. In practice it is difficult to create a 'seamless' extension and smaller scale extension would articulate the resultant width and mass.*

6. The existing tree planting and verge would filter views and the corner marks the transition from bungalows to houses.  
*There are no mature trees in the adjacent highway verge and insufficient space in the remaining side garden for effective soft landscaping. The resultant building would create a more prominent building line and would dominate the corner*
7. The proposed western elevation would be set back from the existing fence line of the rear/ side garden of the host property  
*The scale of the resultant building, which is not accurately depicted in the elevation plans would be substantially higher and bulkier than the existing fence which follows the contours of the sloping and terraces ground*
8. It is unnecessary to adhere to strict building lines to meet the objectives of the SPD and if strictly applied would lead to standardised development.  
*The building line would be advanced by a substantial rather than marginal amount and the open spacious corner is a distinctive feature of the cul-de-sac*
9. The proposed side window would aid surveillance  
*The Officers are in favour of side windows but one placed close to a footway may be exposed to overlooking which could result a future desire to mitigate overlooking e.g. by the provision of a higher side boundary fence*

## **Conclusions**

The proposed design is one which is contrary to the thrust of the SPD and the adopted Local Plan. It is noteworthy that paragraph 134 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of local design policies and design guides which have the status of supplementary planning documents.

Whilst I note the applicant is seeking to extend the dwelling to provide additional accommodation for her mother-in-law, the personal circumstances of the applicant do not outweigh the permanent harm I have identified.

The scheme is therefore considered unacceptable.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be **REFUSED**

## **Reason for Refusal**

The proposed extension, by reason of its siting and scale, would be unacceptably dominant and prominent and would be contrary to the pattern of development and the spacious open corner within the immediate locality. Therefore, it would be contrary to Policy BDP19 of the Bromsgrove District Plan; the Council's High Quality Design SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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