

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2016

by Andy Harwood CMS MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 5 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/16/3153491

The Bungalow, 12 Grantham Road, Bristol BS15 1JR

- 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 Mrs Patricia O'Driscoll of King's Barton Housing Association against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 15/04261/F, dated 29 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is the Demolition of an existing bungalow and outbuildings and construction of 4 No 1-bedroom flats in a new 2-storey building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Revised plans were submitted during the period in which the Council dealt with the planning application. These revisions resulted in a proposal for a building with reduced height and scale than was originally submitted. It is clear that this revised scheme is what the Council took into account when making their decision. I will consider the appeal on the basis of those plans.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Grantham Road is a residential street close to commercial areas. The appeal site includes a modest detached bungalow, its surrounding garden and driveway as well as part of the adjoining site to the south which is within the ownership of the appellant.
 5. The size, style and eras of the buildings along the road vary considerably. On entering the road from Soundwell Road, there are some traditional properties close to the junction as well as the rear service areas of commercial premises. On approaching the site, there are some twentieth century dwellings interspersed with a more modern dwelling within the corner of the road and then two pairs of large dwellings. To the south and on the opposite side of the road from the appeal site is a long line of traditional terraced dwellings. Directly opposite are 2 pairs of semi-detached dwellings with traditional features. Next to those semi-detached dwellings is a much more modern
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- building on the corner of the road which appears to be in use as apartments or flats. This is within the appellant's ownership.
6. The small bungalow on the appeal site is distinctly lower than the neighbouring dwellings and there is a good deal of space above roof level between No 14 and Grantham House. Grantham House appears to have some original features similar to those on nearby dwellings but has been added to with a large 2 storey flat roof addition as well as the modern buildings to the rear and side. Further to the south of Grantham House other buildings are of a greater scale and much more modern design. Boundary walls generally define the back edge of the pavement along the road with modest openings for driveways and pedestrian gates.
 7. There is also significant variation in materials used in the area. However, the natural stone wall along the front of the site with only minor openings for the driveway entrance and pedestrian access is an attractive feature. It provides a degree of unification between this site and the more traditional buildings nearby. A similar wall exists along the frontage of Grantham House. The vegetation behind the wall was very overgrown at the time of my site visit but even if maintained would provide some greening of the street scene.
 8. The proposal would involve the construction of a higher, 2 storey building providing 4 flats. The building would include 2 large gables facing the street. This would reflect some of the traditional dwellings nearby, particularly the semi-detached dwellings opposite albeit at a greater scale and with a long 'cat-slide' roof between. That central roof would be set back behind the gables and would not be prominent. At the rear the single pitched roof would have windows breaking the eaves line. The design would not look out of place in an area with a significant variety of buildings.
 9. The building would be set back from the front of the site to allow for 4 parking spaces although would be further forward than the bungalow. A space would be left to the northern side with No 14. The boundary between the site and Grantham House would be altered with a space left for a shared garden. Due to the proposed position of the building along with the pitched roof sloping away from the side boundaries a reasonable amount of space would remain between the buildings as seen from the street. The side elevations would extend a long way back into the site but the building would be obscured by the neighbouring buildings.
 10. The loss of the wall and landscaping and replacement by the proposed parking area with a wide entrance would open up the site giving it a much harsher appearance. The use of grass paving would not bring about the same degree of softening of the street scene as the existing planting behind the boundary wall. The opening up of the frontage, creation of parking area and the loss of an attractive wall would not allow for sufficient new landscaping or boundary treatment to overcome the harm that would be caused. In this respect it would not involve high quality urban design. Even where large parking areas are set out in front of buildings nearby such as at Grantham House, the cars are screened to some degree by boundary walls. The dwelling to the north at No 14 does have parking at the front but a wall has been retained along some of the boundary.
 11. The existing landscaping and wall may not be subject of particular protection through the planning system. However there is no certainty that the removal

of these features would otherwise occur or precisely what form that would take even though it is a theoretical possibility. I do not therefore give this much weight in consideration of this issue.

12. In relation to the main issue, the proposals would have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area. This would not comply with Policies DM26, DM27 and DM29 of the Bristol Local Plan¹ and Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy²

Other Matters

13. The 4 flats would be small 1 bedroom units. No planning controls over the suggested age restriction of prospective occupants or the social-rented tenure are proposed but the appellant is a community based housing association. I am satisfied that the proposal would improve the mix and balance of accommodation within the area which would be an advantage of this scheme in an accessible urban area. The proposal would not have harmful impacts upon the occupants of adjoining dwellings. The space around the building including the large garage court between the rear of the site and the dwellings within Victoria Park would provide a good buffer between the additional activity on site and those properties. The building would not be an imposing structure for those nearby residents and would not cause significant additional overlooking.
14. The use of the front of the site for parking would contribute some additional parking spaces but would also prevent some on-street parking. I recognise that the appellant has proposed off-street parking due to local concerns but in my view this as well as the other positive aspects of the proposal does not outweigh my conclusions on the main issue. I have considered whether planning conditions could overcome my conclusion but the changes would need to be significant and could raise other concerns.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andy Harwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, adopted July 2014

² Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy, adopted June 2011