
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2016

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/16/3157052

73 Court Farm Road, Longwell Green, Bristol BS30 9AD

- 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 A and J Bryant against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref PK16/1184/F, dated 9 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2016.
 - The development is described as “alterations to form rooms in roof, side and rear extensions”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues to be the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of its host dwelling and the wider surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is single-storey with a gable end at the side and a hipped roof projection at the front. It is one of a pair of similar properties set back from Court Farm Road behind front gardens used for parking, but fringed with mature planting. Court Farm Road has a strongly suburban character comprising, in the main, of detached properties between one and two storeys in height, set back from it behind front gardens. Residential cul-de-sacs run roughly perpendicularly to Court Farm Road which add a sense of density to the area. However, this is ventilated by the mature vegetation including tall trees, such as those in the rear garden of the appeal dwelling, that add a pleasing verdant character to the streetscene.
 4. The proposed development would see extensive change to the existing property including securing the conversion of the hipped roof projection at the front to a gable, the front of which would address Court Farm Road, with fenestration employed within its apex. The existing gable-ended element of the roof would be lifted, and the property would be extended to the side, replacing the existing garage with an integral one. At the rear, two-storey extension is proposed, with a gable-ended roof, the ridge of which would be of the same height as that of the proposed lifted roof. This element would include extensive glazing at ground and first floors. Rooflights are proposed for the roofslopes of this element, and to the rear roof of the main part of the house.
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5. I saw in the wider area a variety of roof styles including gable and hipped roof elements, and indeed that both of these features are already employed on the host building. I also noted that the scale of properties varies in the area. However, the proposed development, due to the excessive scale of its roof lift would result in a feature that would dominate the front elevation of the appeal dwelling, and appear uncomfortably out of proportion with its modest scale. This incongruity would be compounded by the change of the hip to gable, which would read as a subservient feature to the lifted roof rather than a focal point, as is the case with the current hipped roof projection. In the context of the proportions, detailing and scale of No 75, the bulk of the proposed roof uplift, and its consequent uncomfortable elevational proportions would thus appear as a lopsided and discordant feature in the streetscene, and cause considerable harm to its character.
6. Whilst I note the appellants' comments that the set back of the property reduces its visibility from the street, this would not mitigate to any significant degree the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings that the proposed development would cause. Although the proposed development would remove the extension and garage, and screen views of the rears of the housing development behind from the streetscene, these are not matters that would weigh heavily in its favour. The proposed development would maintain the building line and overall footprint of built development on the site, however, these considerations are merely indicative of a lack of harm in these regards as opposed to positive benefits, and are thus not matters that weigh heavily in favour of the appeal scheme.
7. The proposed development would thus cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the streetscene. For these reasons the appeal scheme would run contrary to Policy CS1 of the *South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy* (adopted December 2013); Policy H4 of the *South Gloucestershire Local Plan* (adopted January 2006); the *National Planning Policy Framework* ('the Framework'); and the *South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document* (adopted August 2007). Taken together, and amongst other matters, the guidance and policies seek to ensure that the form, scale, height and massing of alterations to existing buildings respect and enhance their character and that of their surroundings.

Other Matters

8. I note that the proposed increase to the roof height would enable a positive use for the building and maximise the living space for modern family needs in an area with good access to local shops and services. The proposal would also improve the efficiency of the site to a degree, and the accessibility of the dwelling. However, these would be modest benefits that do not outweigh the proposed development's harm to the character and appearance of its host dwelling or the area more generally.
9. I have considered the appellants' comment that the proposed development would avoid the necessity for larger scale extension, or demolition and rebuild. However, the details of such alternative schemes are not before me and thus any perceived harms in this regard do not help to justify the harmful effects the proposed development would cause.

10. I have considered whether the proposal would constitute sustainable development for the purposes of the Framework, paragraph 7 of which establishes its three dimensions, namely social, economic and environmental.
11. Like any new development the appeal scheme would have economic and social benefits although due to the scale of the proposal they would be modest and thus would only carry limited weight in the overall planning balance. Changes to the roof would trigger the deployment of energy efficiency measures in line with the Building Regulations. However, as this is a statutory requirement it would only weigh in favour of the proposed development to a modest degree in environmental terms, which would be demonstrably outweighed by the harm that the proposed development would cause through failing to protect or enhance the built environment of its surroundings. Thus the environmental dimension of sustainable development would not be met by the appeal scheme and its failure in these regards would outweigh its modest social and economic benefits. For this reason the appeal scheme would not constitute sustainable development for the purposes of the Framework.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan insofar as the policies that have been brought to my attention are concerned. No material considerations have been advanced that outweigh this conflict. Thus, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR