
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B1605/D/16/3160156

Chavenage, 13 Merlin Way, Cheltenham GL53 0LS

- 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 & Mrs J Butt against the decision of Cheltenham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00989/FUL, dated 31 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor to existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The existing dwelling is a bungalow in a residential neighbourhood. The houses in proximity of the site display a variety of designs, however the properties are generally two-storey and of the same height and scale. They also are mainly finished in light coloured brick with small areas of wood cladding, render or hanging tiles on the elevations. The host dwelling, with the neighbouring bungalow at No 13A, are two of a limited number of bungalows in the area. Nonetheless, due to their proximity to the road and the curve of the road they both appear prominently in the street scene.
 4. The proposed extension would provide a first floor above the central part of the existing bungalow. Its design would incorporate an asymmetrical pitched roof and it would be finished with a mix of render and cedar cladding.
 5. There are a few examples of houses with asymmetrical roofs in the area, although none are in proximity of the site. Therefore although the two-storey nature of the resultant building would reflect the character of the area, the design of the proposed roof would contrast markedly with its immediate context. Also although there is cladding, render or hanging tiles at the properties opposite the site, it is generally limited to small areas between the windows at first floor level, or between the ground floor and the first floor. The cladding and render on the proposal would cover the whole of the first floor and as such would be far more extensive than at the nearby houses. Consequently, the development would contrast strongly with its surroundings.
-

Furthermore, the existing bungalow's prominent appearance in the street scene means the extension's incongruity would be particularly pronounced and this would detract from the appearance of the street scene.

6. The property does benefit from permitted development rights and it is the appellant's view that an extension built utilising these rights would have an inferior design to that currently proposed. I have also seen the letters signed by a number of neighbours suggesting they also prefer the current proposal to an extension which could be built under permitted development rights. Whilst I recognise the appellant's ability to construct an extension which, in their view, would have a worse design than the appeal proposal, this does not justify the development which I consider is also poorly designed.
7. I have been referred to a development on Church Road, Leckhampton. However, from the limited details I have before me of that development, it appears to be a considerable distance from the site, has a different setting and is not comparable to the case before me. Notwithstanding this, each development must be determined on its own merits.
8. Also whilst I recognise the appellant's commitment to using high quality materials, this would not mitigate for the incongruous design of the extension.
9. In conclusion the development would contrast with its surroundings to such a degree that it would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore it would be contrary to Policy CP7 of the Local Plan which requires development to be of high architectural design and respect the character of the locality. It would also be contrary to the advice in the Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document which seeks to ensure the character of the residential area is not eroded, and the National Planning Policy Framework which supports high quality design.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR