
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 9 November 2016

by Olivia Spencer BA BSc DipArch RIBA

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

Decision date: 24 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/16/3153538

Haberfield House, Hotwell Road, Hotwells, Bristol BS8 4NH

- 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 Salvatore Fragapane against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 15/05456/F, dated 23 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is conversion of vacant loft accommodation to create 6 two bedroom flats.
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Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/16/3153542

Haberfield House, Hotwell Road, Hotwells, Bristol BS8 4NH

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Salvatore Fragapane against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 15/05457/LA, dated 23 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2016.
 - The works proposed are conversion of vacant loft accommodation to create 6 two bedroom flats.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are firstly, the effect of the proposal on the special interest of the listed building and on the character and appearance of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area and secondly, whether the proposal would contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change with particular regard to the integration of renewable and low carbon energy.

Reasons

Listed building and Conservation Area

3. Haberfield House is a Grade II listed block of late 19th century almshouses. The appellant's Heritage statement notes that it is a good example of Bristol's collection of almshouses and its historic special interest is derived also from its association with Lady Sarah Haberfield.

4. The block, constructed of brick with limestone dressings and a slate roof, comprises 6 'houses' each originally containing 4 modest flats arranged symmetrically around a generous central hallway and stair. This symmetry and repetition is evident also in the external design, with each house on both north and south elevations having a central projecting pedimented 2 storey bay with ball finial, windows to each side, brick pilasters and, at roof level, expressed party walls and tall chimney stacks. Stone string-courses and a bold bracketed eaves cornice run across the block. The larger windows with stone dressings and formal stone framed entrances on the south elevation give this facade a particular stature and prominence.
5. The Neo Georgian style of the building, and the balance and careful composition of its design are important elements of its architectural special interest and heritage significance.
6. The proposal includes the introduction of dormer windows to the southern roof slope. These would be set above the existing windows to each side of the projecting bay and as such would comply with the overall symmetry of the houses and repeating rhythm of the block. However they would intrude on the clear span of the slate roofs that currently provide a simple and visually recessive element above and behind the complex and articulated elevation of the building. In so doing they would distract from the architectural composition of the south elevation and in particular would inappropriately dilute the visual prominence of the central pedimented projecting porches which rise above the eaves line.
7. I am unable to speculate on the relative effect of a scheme that would include '*numerous rooflights on the northern roof slope*' as such a proposal is not before me. I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits. I note that many of the houses in adjacent terraces have mansard roofs with dormer windows. However, the design of these terraces differs significantly from that of Haberfield House, in particular many of these dormer windows are located behind parapets. The existence of dormer windows on other buildings in the area does not therefore justify the harm that would result from the appeal proposal.
8. The hallways and stairs have a generous and spacious character reflecting the restrained but carefully composed language of the exterior that goes beyond merely meeting utilitarian needs. The stairs turn on landings set within the main body of the building leaving the 2 storey porches on the south elevation clear. At first floor level the rooms within the north projecting bays enclose part of the upper hallways giving them a lesser overall length than that at ground level. However this is more than off-set by the open space above the stairs and ground floor lobbies which allow unimpeded views to, and light from, the large 1st floor windows of the porches.
9. To facilitate access to the proposed loft space flats additional flights of stairs are proposed in each house. These would in part rise above the existing stairs but off-set, intruding into the vertical clear space of the south bays with a half landing spanning the porch constructed across the 1st floor windows. These stairs would be a substantial intrusion into the open space of the porches and upper hallways, constrict views to the first floor window and appear clumsily at odds with the simple, clear and generous design of the interior of the building.
10. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural interest of the listed building.

11. Haberfield House lies within the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area (CA). The CA is characterised by the high quality of its buildings and the historic development of its streets and spaces. The prominence of the appeal building has been reduced by the modern road system and in particular the flyover. Nevertheless it is visible from the road junction to the south, from the southern end of Dowry Parade and its northern façade forms part of the Joy Hill streetscene. Further it is identified in the Clifton and Hotwells Character Appraisal (2010) as a landmark building of local significance. The harmful impact of the proposals on the listed building and on the south elevation in particular, would therefore fail also to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the Bristol Core Strategy (CS) (2011), and Policies DM30 and DM31 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014). These require development to contribute positively to the area's character and identity, safeguard and enhance the historic environment, respect the design of the host building, and preserve the special interest/ character and appearance of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.
12. The proposal would result in the provision of additional dwellings in a sustainable location. This would be a benefit of the scheme. I note also that it would give rise to additional income to assist the long term maintenance and up-keep of the building. However, National Planning Policy states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Whilst harm to the heritage significance of the listed building and the CA would be less than substantial, the benefits identified are modest and not sufficient to outweigh that harm.

Climate change

13. CS Policies BCS13 and BCS15 set out requirements for development to contribute to both mitigating and adapting to climate change. Policy BCS15 requires submitted Sustainability Statements to address a number of issues including integrating the use of renewable and low carbon energy. CS Policy BCS14 notes that considerations including the historic environment should be taken into account in assessing proposals for renewable and low carbon sources of energy.
14. The submitted Sustainability Statement (SS) gives detailed proposals for a wide range of energy and water conservation measures, as well as waste and recycling strategies during construction, and concludes that a reduction in carbon emissions equivalent to 20% is achievable. However, the only on site low-carbon energy supply system considered is photovoltaic panels on the south side of the building. There is no dispute that these would be harmful to the heritage assets, but no other systems are examined or assessed as part of the SS. Whether the use of renewable and low carbon energy could be integrated into the proposal has not therefore been fully examined and I conclude the SS thus falls short of the requirements set out in CS Policy BCS15.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Olivia Spencer

INSPECTOR