
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2017

by Janet Wilson BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI DMS

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

Decision date: 16th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/17/3168293

49 The Crescent, Sea Mills, Bristol BS9 2JT

- 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 James Thorp against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/06266/H, dated 15 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2017.
 - The development is described as *"a 1st floor extension to the rear of the property to be added on top of a previous ground floor extension (permitted development) to add an additional bedroom and bathroom to the property. Access to these new rooms will be via the existing upstairs landing. The exterior brickwork colour will match the existing property and previous extension and the extended roof will match the style of the existing roof using double roman concrete tiles and blend seamlessly into the current roof. One side window is to be added to the existing third bedroom adjacent to the neighbouring (unattached) property which will be fitted with obscured glazing to avoid overlooking the adjacent property. Another side window is also to be added to the new bathroom facing the attached property which will also be fitted with obscured glazing. Two further windows are to be added (on the landing and in the new bedroom) overlooking the property's garden"*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the host dwelling, and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Sea Mills Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The property is located within the Sea Mills CA. This is an important example of a formally laid out Twentieth Century Garden Suburb which survives generally intact. Much of the character of the CA results from the geometric precision of its formal layout. This part of the CA exhibits strong front and rear building lines of predominantly semi-detached houses of mainly rectangular plan form. This produces a strong regularity of rhythm where uniformity is a fundamental characteristic.
 4. The Conservation Area 21 Sea Mills Character Appraisal & Management Proposals 2011 (SMCAMP) provides a detailed explanation of how sensitive the CA is to even the smallest of physical changes which, in other areas, may have little or no impact. These include extensions and alterations to the roofscape
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and those which break the rear building line of domestic properties. Such alterations undermine the simple uniformity of appearance and symmetry found extensively in this CA. It emphasises that relatively small individual changes to houses, cumulatively threaten the character and appearance of the area.

5. The appeal property has a symmetrical relationship to its attached neighbour. The introduction of a second storey above the existing extension to the full height of the original house would be visually substantial. It would materially change the appearance of the host dwelling by noticeably unbalancing it. This would be visible from along the Crescent, from the rear gardens of adjacent properties and from gaps between buildings on West Parade. As a result it would detract from the simple form of the house diluting both its uniformity and simple architectural integrity. It would also diminish the appearance of spaciousness when viewed from an angle along the Crescent. These factors would materially impinge and be harmful to the appearance of the dwelling and the characteristics of the CA as a whole.
6. The statutory duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a heritage asset, in this case the Sea Mills CA, is a matter of considerable importance and weight. The extension would have an adverse effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset and would result in "less than substantial" harm in the words of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
7. Where less than substantial harm occurs the Framework indicates that this should be weighed against the public benefits of the development. The appellant states that the extension would allow internal accommodation to flow effectively, he acknowledges that a design subservient to the original house would be hard to achieve due to the need to work from the footprint of the existing single story extension. These points are acknowledged, indeed they are not in dispute, but these aspects are significantly outweighed by the permanent harm which would result from the development upon the surrounding CA.
8. For these reasons the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA and it would neither preserve nor enhance its character or appearance. It would be in conflict with Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Core Strategy (2011), policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014), the Sea Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the guidance contained within Supplementary Planning Document 2: A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions (2005). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development contributes to the quality of urban design, reinforces local distinctiveness, ensures that extensions respect the building form of both the host building and the street scene and that extensions are physically and visually subservient.

Other matters

9. My attention has been drawn to other properties in the area which have already been extended in a similar manner to that now proposed. Limited details of these have been provided by the appellant and I do not know the precise circumstances of each. I did view all those outlined in evidence on my site visit and observed that there were differences between them and the

appeal before me. The example which most closely relates to the form of the appeal proposal serves to confirm that such extensions do materially change the nature of the relationship between the simple rectangular form of the semi-detached houses which are so characteristic of this area. Moreover it demonstrates the visual impact which results and is not the type of development that should be used as a reason to allow similar works here. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons and having considered all matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Janet Wilson

INSPECTOR