
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by H Porter BA(Hons) PGDip IHBC

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

Decision date: 30 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/W/17/3171627
14, The Maples, Nailsea BS48 4RT

- 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 Ralph Dicks against the decision of North Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/2687/F, dated 22 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is new single storey attached 1-bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Number 14 The Maples (No 14) is located within a late 20th century suburban development on the outskirts of Nailsea. The area is characterised by the broadly consistent scale and form of the houses, as well as by a regular plot rhythm and layout. Houses are grouped by a specific arrangement of semi-detached pairs, detached or terraces with properties at the end of a group typically occupying more generous plots. Throughout the area there is an overall sense of balance in groups of houses and careful spatial planning contributes to the overall sense of an open and spacious environment.
4. Numbers 7 to 14 The Maples form a cohesive group of two terraces, separated by a central passage. The overall balance and symmetry of the terraces, combined with the generous side garden of No 14 add to the sense of openness and careful plot layout that typifies the character and appearance of the wider suburb. A previous Inspector has already assessed the appeal site and the contribution to the character and appearance of the area¹. Although the nature of the proposed development and local plan policy has changed, I similarly find that the appeal site is in a prominent position at the very edge of the suburb, flanking Hannah More Road, which contributes to a sense of openness that runs consistently along this route.
5. The appeal proposal would introduce an additional, single-storey dwelling on the garden plot to the side of No 14. Although the material detailing would fit with the local area, the proposal would present an uncomfortable addition that would undermine the balance and symmetry of the terrace group. The addition

¹ APP/D0121/W/15/3133721

of a front door and window at the end of the group would also appear at odds with the otherwise consistent arrangement of ground floor window, front door and garage that each house presents. The proposal would therefore disrupt the rhythm and regular layout of Numbers 7 – 14, to the detriment of the local street scene.

6. At its highest point, the proposed roof would reach above the cill of the upper floor windows and, while only single-storey, the proposal would nonetheless appear as a conspicuous and contrived addition. Even noting the relative proximity to industrial buildings on the opposite side of Hannah More Road, the proposal would appear as unduly prominent and that would undermine the simple detailing and regular proportions that characterise the wider suburb harmful to the local character.
7. The proposal would also bisect the existing garden to No 14. While the remainder may broadly fit with the size of gardens along the rest of the terrace, that of the proposed new dwelling would be substantially smaller. Notwithstanding that this exterior provision may satisfy nationally prescribed standards, and accommodate bin and cycle storage, it would also appear disproportionately small compared to the garden area that end-of-terrace properties tend to have. I also note that there are other small gardens in the area; however, those referred to at Earlsfield are associated with a cul-de-sac development of more modestly-scaled dwellings in a less conspicuous location than the appeal site.
8. Given the specific circumstances of the appeal site's location, the proposed garden area would be atypical. As the previous Inspector also found, the space between No 14 and Hannah More Road would be fundamentally lost, to the detriment of the wider area. Overall, I likewise consider that the proposal before me would appear squeezed into the site and would fundamentally undermine the important sense of openness that is intrinsic to the character and appearance of the wider suburb.
9. I consider therefore that the appeal proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. The harm that would result would not be outweighed by the benefits of providing an open-market dwelling within the settling boundary of Nailsea, even if it would contribute to the mix and size of housing available in the area. Consequently, the development would fail to accord with Policy CS12 of the North Somerset Core Strategy, adopted January 2017 which seeks to ensure that proposals demonstrate sensitivity to the existing local character already established in an area. The proposal would also run contrary Policy DM32 and DM37 of the North Somerset Development Management Policies: Sites and Policies Plan Part 1, adopted July 2016 insofar as they require the design of development demonstrates sensitivity to the local character and seeks to enhance local distinctiveness; and ensure new residential development is not squeezed into inappropriate locations or gardens and is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. Moreover, the proposal would run contrary to the principles of the Framework, which seek to secure high quality design and take account of the character of different areas.

Other matters

10. In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to other properties in the area that have already been extended, some by two storeys. Those that I saw appeared to be side extensions rather than new dwellings and so are fundamentally different from the appeal scheme. Nor do I know the

circumstances of those cases, or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. In any event, I do not consider that there is a compelling precedent for the appeal scheme, which has been assessed on its own merits.

11. I have taken into consideration that there was not a significant number of objections during the application period, and that no modifications to the existing dwelling are proposed, as well as that the site sits within a fenced boundary. I also note that there would be no harm in relation to the neighbours' living conditions, that sufficient off-street parking provision would be provided, and that the design would limit further development in the roof. However, these are all neutral factors that, while not counting against the proposal, do not weigh in its favour nor counter the harm to the character and appearance of the area identified above.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR