

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017.

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/17/3171917

2 All Saints Cottages, All Saints Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 1TU

- 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 Mrs Julia Lewis against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.16/2827/HHOLD, dated 14 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is the removal of store and construction of new 2-storey extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of store and construction of new 2-storey extension at 2 All Saints Cottages, All Saints Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 1TU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref S.16/2827/HHOLD, dated 14 December 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property, and on the setting of the neighbouring All Saints Church, a listed building (*Grade I*).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is now a red-brick semi-detached dwelling, but the brick opening markings on its front elevation suggest that it was initially used as a stable or store. Judging from the plaque on the front elevation the original buildings were built in 1864 as '*Prestbury Villas*'. Both properties have been extended, in the appeal property's case to the rear, which has resulted in a twin-gabled east elevation. The pair stand cheek-by-jowl with All Saints Church, with the appeal property being separated from it by a small garden. Given its scale, the church dominates both properties.
 4. The proposed extension would replace a small store, presenting a complete contrast in style to the host property. Angular, with a flat roof, its side and rear elevations would be principally clad in timber, around limited openings, whilst the front elevation, in effect, would be comprised of a glazed screen.
 5. In response to the Council's initial comments, revised plans were produced, but in the Council's view:
-

'..the revisions and proposed planting do not go far enough to ensure the extension complies with (Stroud District Local Plan – LP) Policy HC8(2) which seeks to ensure that 'the height, scale, form and design of the extension or outbuilding is in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling...., and the site's wider setting and location.'

6. I do not share the basis for this assessment. The unashamedly contemporary and contrasting design proposed, and the lightness of the proposed construction at the front would ensure, to my mind, that the visual integrity of the pair, including the host property, would remain largely intact. The original buildings would continue to be read and appreciated as part of Stroud's Victorian heritage. The Council's concerns as to height and scale are noted, but the extension would not exceed the eaves height of the host property, and the width of the extension is not disproportionate to the width of the front elevation of the former Prestbury Villas.
7. As the Council's conservation officer says, Stroud expanded into this part of the Uplands during the mid Victorian era. The listed church was therefore a comparative latecomer, being built during the early part of the last century, in very close proximity to extant development, including the appeal property. The church, given its height and scale, imposed itself and dominated its neighbours, which as a result, along with other built forms, form an integral part of its setting. The church, effectively screens the appeal property from view, short and long distance.
8. From the other side of the valley to the south, from parts of Summer Street, the church is seen and appreciated in its wider context. The Council attaches significance to the green areas around the church, including the appeal property's side garden. I share the Council's view that the large area of garden greenery immediately to the south of the church plays a major role in providing its setting.
9. But it is the dense belt of trees to the rear, on rising ground to the north of the appeal property, which acts as an attractive verdant backcloth to the church when seen from relatively long distance views, providing part of its 'natural' setting. The appeal property's side garden plays a very limited, if any, role in this regard. The extension could not be seen from short range views in the public realm, and would be barely noticeable from the distant views of concern to the Council, and would certainly not catch the eye or prove detracting.
10. The extension would be built in close proximity to the church. However, the church was itself originally introduced into an expanding urban scene close to extant buildings, which have survived. The close juxtaposition of church and buildings is integral to the church's setting to the rear. The erection of the proposed extension would not prove intrusive or harmful, but would serve to continue the established visual relationship between church and other built forms.
11. I conclude that the proposed extension would sit acceptably in its visual and spatial contexts without harming the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the setting of All Saints Church. Accordingly, there is no conflict with those provisions of LP policy HC8 to which I have already referred, or with those aspects of LP policy ES10 designed to protect the District's heritage assets and their settings. I have also taken full account in my decision of those

aspects of the *National Planning Policy Framework* referred to by the Council in its second reason for refusal.

Conditions

12. The Council's suggested condition on external materials is inappropriate, since the scheme has been clearly designed in materials not intended to match the host property. Full information on materials is provided in the submitted documentation and plans, and no condition in this regard is therefore considered necessary.
13. It is, however, necessary that the development is built in accordance with the approved plans.

Other matters

14. All other representations made have been taken into account, including the responses to consultation of the Town Council and English Heritage, but no other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: The OS location plan and Drawing Nos. 670/P/01; 670/P/02 Rev C; 670/P/03 Rev A; 670/P/10 & 670/P/11 Rev F.