
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/17/3181185

Land opposite Mount Pleasant, Lower Spillmans, Stroud, Gloucestershire

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Anthony Pearson of Pearson Homes Ltd against Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.17/0984/FUL, is dated 3 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is 2 pairs of semi-detached three storey, three bedroomed houses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for 2 pairs of semi-detached three storey, three bedroomed houses is refused.

Procedural matter

2. I have taken the site address from that given on the appeal form, as this describes the site more accurately than that shown on the application form which could suggest 19 Bath Road is part of the site.

Main Issue

3. From the Council's appeal statement I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the adjacent Stroud Industrial Conservation Area (SICA).

Reasons

4. The site is steeply sloped falling from front to back and, to a lesser degree, from east to west. The southern side of Lower Spillmans is generally characterised by narrow houses, either in short terraces or semi-detached. They sit slightly above the road and represent a dense and regular urban form. The northern side of the road comprises the long narrow rear gardens of properties fronting Bath Road. Although many of them have garages addressing Lower Spillmans, a sense of openness, contrasting with the houses opposite, prevails here. The wooded area to the east of the site also contributes to this characteristic.
5. The design and semi-detached nature of the proposed houses would reflect the nearby dwellings, and three of the four houses would be comparably narrow to the properties opposite. However, due to the shape of the site, the house on

plot four would be wider and shallower than is typical of the locality. Moreover the provision of an awkwardly shaped garden at this plot which would mostly be to the side of the house and which would abut the comparatively higher parking area, leads to the perception of this unit being contrived and cramped. Indeed all four gardens would be small and short, contrasting with most of those at the nearby properties, most starkly with the adjacent rear gardens.

6. Furthermore, due to the topography, the parking at the front of the site would dominate the development's contribution to the street scene. A significant amount of engineering and land raising would be necessary to create this parking, but this would not be visually prominent. Nonetheless, the extent of the parking and, in particular, its proximity to the front elevation of the proposed houses, especially at plots one and two, would also add to a cramped character.
7. Also, due to topography, the development would appear prominently from positions southwest along Lower Spillmans. It would interrupt and contrast with the spaciousness on this side of the road and its staggered building line would do little to mitigate that effect. I acknowledge that outline consent has already been granted for built development on this site, but as I understand this included no detail on the scale, layout or appearance, I cannot have any significant regard to it in my consideration of these matters in this appeal.
8. The Council do not consider the proposal would adversely affect the setting of the adjacent SICA, and I have no reason to come to a different view.
9. In summary, the proposal would appear cramped and would contrast unacceptably with the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would fail to accord with Policies CP8(1) and (3), HC1(1) and (9) and CP14(5) of the Stroud District Local Plan which all aim to ensure development has a layout and design that is respectful of its surroundings.

Other matters

10. There are a number of concerns locally relating to highway issues, including the effect of any increase in traffic on Lower Spillmans, the effect on the availability of on-street parking and the usefulness of the parking spaces to be provided to serve the existing houses. I also note the Council query the practicability of the parking, though consider it could be a benefit to local residents. The Highways Authority did not provide detailed comments on the application or the appeal and their pre-application advice relates to a different drawing showing fewer parking spaces and them set deeper into the site. However, in light of my views on the main issue above, these highway issues are not matters on which the appeal turns and they have not formed part of my deliberations.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR