
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/17/3179637

24 Islington Road, Southville, Bristol BS3 1QB

- 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 Zoe Gough of Chew Magna Developments against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/05812/F, dated 25 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling adjacent to No 24.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the neighbouring tree, and whether the development would ensure satisfactory refuse and cycle storage for the occupiers of No 24.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Islington Road is predominantly characterised by long terraces of dwellings. There is a strong uniformity in the street scene due to the consistent scale, materials and design of the houses including the rhythmic positioning of the windows, with bay windows being abundant. No 24 differs slightly from this pattern in that it is a semi-detached house and is not finished in stone as per most of the properties in the street. Nonetheless, its proportions and bay window feature are comparable to the other properties.
4. The proposed dwelling would be lower than the building at No 24, which would reflect the topography. However it would also be narrower and would be set back from the front of No 24. These combine to give it the perception of being overdominated by No 24 and being squeezed onto its plot. Indeed when seen from a number of other neighbouring properties to the rear, the unusual, almost triangular, shape of the building and the minimal width of the rear elevation contribute to a contrived appearance.
5. The fenestration at first floor level on the front elevation emphasises the cramped appearance. Most of the nearby houses only have one first floor window and, where there are two such as at No 24, they are spaced well apart.

The two proposed windows are positioned very close together and suggest a constrained width.

6. There is a large ash tree on adjacent land which, at the time of my visit, had been pruned such that it did not materially overhang the appeal site. This tree is on significantly lower land than the appeal site, and the appellant's Arboricultural Impact Assessment estimates the difference in levels to be 1.8 metres, which I consider reasonably accurate. As such, I consider it unlikely that the proposal would cause any disturbance to the roots of the tree and therefore it would be unlikely to affect the vitality of this tree.
7. Nevertheless, due to its cramped appearance, the dwelling would contrast strongly with the distinctive character and appearance of the area to its detriment.
8. Accordingly the proposal would fail to accord with Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Core Strategy (BCS) which, among other things, expects development to contribute positively to an area's character and reinforce local distinctiveness. It would also conflict with Policies DM26, DM27 and DM29 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) which all generally seek to ensure development respects local character including the pattern, form and design of existing development. The proposal would also be contrary to Policy DM30 of the SADMP which expects development to respect the form and overall design of the host building, but as this policy refers to extensions it has limited relevance to this proposal for a new dwelling, and I give limited weight to this conflict.

Refuse and cycle storage

9. It is not disputed between the parties that the existing house contains three flats. With the addition of the proposal, the Council advise that six cycle parking spaces would be needed on site to serve all the units. Only two spaces are shown on the plans and, due to the small size of the remaining front garden, I cannot be confident that there would be room for a further four, particularly if provided in an enclosed structure as shown on the plans for two cycles.
10. Similarly, the plans show an area for the storage of five bins and from my site visit I saw that this area is currently used to store bins for the existing flats. However I have no evidence before me to demonstrate that the additional bin storage requirements, such as for food waste and recycling, could be conveniently provided on site, particularly in combination with the additional necessary cycle parking.
11. In summary therefore I cannot conclude the development would ensure sufficient refuse and cycle storage facilities are provided for all residents and, because of my concerns regarding their feasibility, it would not be appropriate to secure such fundamental details by condition. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Policy BCS21 which expects development to create a high quality environment for occupiers, Policies BCS10 of the BCS and DM23 of the SADMP which both encourage the use of cycling, and Policy DM32 of the SADMP which requires development to provide sufficient space for the storage of recycling and refuse containers.

Planning Balance

12. The provision of one additional dwelling would be of limited benefit to the Council's supply of housing and, by being a one bedroom house, it would help to ensure a mix in the housing offer locally. Also, I recognise the proposed measures to maximise renewable energy use and energy efficiency and, as set out above, I have considered it is unlikely that there would be an adverse impact on the ash tree. However, the failure of the development to ensure satisfactory refuse and cycling storage, and the harmful effect the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area outweigh these matters.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR