
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 February 2018

by David Wildsmith BSc(Hons) MSc CEng MICE FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/U1620/W/17/3181936
140 Barnwood Road, Gloucester, GL4 3JT

- 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 & Mrs Elvin against the decision of Gloucester City Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00312/FUL, dated 22 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is stated on the application form as "1 no detached house in garden of existing property".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Subsequent to the refusal of planning permission for this proposal the Council adopted the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS), in December 2017. The JCS therefore comprises the development plan for the area, and both the Council and the appellants were given the opportunity to update their appeal statements to take account of this changed planning policy context. Whilst the appellants indicated that they did not wish to add any further information, the Council explained that Policies SD5 and SD11 from the emerging JCS, cited in the decision notice, have now been renumbered SD4 (Design Requirements) and SD10 (Residential Development) in the adopted JCS. I have therefore had regard to these policies in reaching my decision.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is shown on the submitted plans as the whole curtilage of 140 Barnwood Road. This is a detached dwelling, located on a corner plot at the junction of Barnwood Road and Barnwood Avenue. The well-treed surrounding area is predominantly residential, but there are also other uses in close proximity to the site, including a shop and post office, the Wootton Hall Social Club, a church a veterinary surgery and a children's day nursery.
5. The appeal proposal seeks to construct a 2-storey, 4-bedroom detached dwelling to the north-western side of 140 Barnwood Road, creating a new planning unit in the process. This proposed dwelling would be about 8m wide and 11m deep, and

would rise to 5m at its eaves, with a ridge height of 9.5m. It would project forwards of the front elevation of No 140 by about 2.3m, be positioned about 1.3m away from this neighbouring property, and would be set back about 1m from Barnwood Avenue. Pedestrian access to the front of the proposed dwelling would be from a new entrance on Barnwood Avenue.

6. Photographic representations attached to the appellants' statement show that a timber fence is proposed along this Barnwood Avenue frontage, although these representations do not show the proposed parking and turning area, which would be at the rear of the dwelling, accessed from Barnwood Avenue. The existing front boundary of No 140 is set at an angle, in order to accommodate an open grassed area outside the property boundary containing 2 fairly large street trees.
7. I saw at my site visit that there is a wide range of building types and sizes in the vicinity of the appeal site, with buildings being generally set well back from the road, giving a sense of space and an open feel to the street-scene in both Barnwood Road and Barnwood Avenue. With these points in mind, and whilst I accept that the proposed dwelling would be a well-designed building taken in isolation, I am not persuaded that it would sit comfortably at this location.
8. It would occupy a prominent position within the street-scene, but would clearly be a narrower building on a noticeably narrower site than the nearby buildings to the east, making it appear cramped on its plot. It would also be sited much closer to the footway and carriageway of Barnwood Avenue than other buildings are to their respective highways in this locality. As such, it would not respond well to the existing pattern of development in the area, or the prevailing sense of space, but would appear as a rather contrived, cramped and awkwardly positioned addition to the street-scene.
9. Because of this, it would fail to respond positively to, and respect the character of its surroundings, as sought by JCS Policies SD4 and SD10. It would also fail to achieve the high design quality sought by the likes of paragraphs 17, 61 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework").
10. I have noted the appellants' comments regarding the plot widths of 173 and 175 Barnwood Road, opposite the appeal site, but as these are semi-detached properties, which read as a single unit in the street-scene and are not sited adjacent to a junction, I do not consider that they add weight in favour of the appeal proposal. Similarly, although I accept that Nos 9 and 11 Barnwood Avenue have plot widths comparable to the appeal proposal, they are not prominent in the street-scene and do not result in a cramped feel at the nearby junction. Again, they do not provide any meaningful support for the appeal proposal.
11. I also acknowledge that 1b Barnwood Avenue lies closer to the road frontage than other dwellings in this road, but as this is a bungalow, it again is not a prominent feature in the street-scene and does not unduly disrupt the sense of space which exists around the Barnwood Road/Barnwood Avenue junction.
12. Taking all the above points into account, I conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly I find it to be in conflict with Policies SD4 and SD10 of the JCS, and the design policies of the Framework to which I have already referred.

Other matters

13. I note that the Council Officers' delegated decision report considered that the proposed dwelling would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, and would not unacceptably impact upon the living conditions of nearby existing residents. I share those views. I also note that no concerns have been raised on grounds of drainage or flood risk, and that although the Council's Archaeologist has indicated that the site lies within a known Roman cemetery, there is nothing to suggest that any impact in this regard could not be dealt with by means of an appropriate planning condition, if planning permission was to be granted. Again, I share that view.
14. Insofar as highways and parking matters are concerned, I note from the application form that 2 parking spaces are proposed, although these have not been clearly shown on the submitted plans. That said, it seems to me that adequate space would be available for 2 vehicles to park within the appeal site, and whilst I noted the presence of double yellow lines and "Keep Clear" zig-zag restrictions past the proposed site access, on balance I see no reason why acceptable on-site parking provision could not be made.

Conclusion

15. Notwithstanding my favourable findings on the other matters raised, my adverse conclusions on the main issue mean that this proposal is not acceptable. Accordingly, I dismiss this appeal.

David Wildsmith

INSPECTOR