The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2019

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/19/3223844
110 Watleys End Road, Winterbourne, Bristol, BS36 1PP

- 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 J Harwood against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
- The application Ref PT18/5556/F, dated 22 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2019.
- The development proposed is new build detached dwelling.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant has raised concerns with the Council's handling of the application, and in particular, the lack of negotiation over any potential solutions that could make the proposal acceptable. This is a matter that would need to be taken up with the Council in the first instance, and in determining the appeal I have only had regard to the planning merits of the case.

3. The Council's decision notice and delegated report referred to the July 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). This has now been replaced by the February 2019 version of the Framework. However, the policies that are relevant to this appeal have not changed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises an area of land on the corner of Watleys End Road and Crossley Close. The site forms part of the residential curtilage to 110 Watleys End Road (No.110) and includes some shrubs at the front, a hardstanding area for parking at the rear, with the remainder covered by loose pebbles. The site boundary, other than the access to the parking area, is enclosed by a low wall with a pebble dash finish topped off with red brick. This wall extends to the frontage of No.110. A similar wall is to be found around 108 Watleys End Road (No.108), on the opposite side of the junction. To the south of the site is a small courtyard of single storey garages.

6. Leaving aside the existing house (No.110), the undeveloped character of the appeal site contributes to the general sense of openness that there is at this junction. This sense of openness is repeated at No.108, which is a mirror image of the layout of the appeal site, with an identical courtyard of single storey garages to the rear. The depth and width of the side garden to both properties creates an important space in the local streetscene, which appears to have been purposefully planned into the estate layout to provide relief to what is otherwise a quite intensely developed area. The proposed development would unacceptably reduce the openness at this point, would fail to respond to the rhythm of development and would therefore be harmful to the streetscene in these respects.

7. The appeal site occupies a visually prominent corner location and whilst neither the host property nor the surrounding properties on Watleys End Road are of any architectural or historic importance, they do have a distinctive formal layout characterised by semi-detached and terraced two storey properties set within plots, which vary in size, but generally have a reasonable front garden, often used for parking, and a generous rear garden.

8. Within that context, the appeal proposal would appear incongruous due to its detached design and its failure to integrate with the existing built and planned form. The latter is the result of the constrained and awkward shape of the proposed plot. Other than a narrow strip, there would be no meaningful rear garden and the front garden would be truncated by the sharp tapering of the boundary, on the corner with Crossley Close. As a consequence, the proposed dwelling would not sit comfortably on the site and would be out of keeping with the local pattern of development.

9. The constraints imposed by the plot also result in a development that appears cramped. The new building would be narrower than No.110 and deeper, with its north western corner hard up against the site boundary. The projecting single storey entrance porch would add to this cramped appearance. This is also accentuated by the design, in particular the fenestration, which fails to pick up on the detail of No.110. In addition, a new close boarded fence on top of the existing low wall would introduce a feature that diminishes the value that this low wall, with that opposite, makes to the streetscene. It would also further reduce the sense of openness at this junction.

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and the visual qualities of the streetscene. I therefore consider that the development would be contrary to Policies CS1, CS16 and CS17 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy, Policy PSP1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Policies, Sites & Places Plan and paragraph 127 of the Framework. These policies seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality of design and site planning, that its scale, siting and layout respects the character of the area and local distinctiveness, responds positively to its surroundings and maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

11. The appellant argues that as adequate car parking and amenity space is provided, the proposed development cannot be considered cramped. However, this does not affect my overall findings. The appeal site's constraints lead to a development whose main ground floor rear aspect faces directly onto the proposed parking spaces, which are shown end on end. Whilst there is a side

garden, this would not be overlooked by the proposed dwelling and it is questionable as to whether this space would be usable and functional.

12. The appellant also contends that the proposed development is no different to other developments permitted on corner plots, specifically a development in Oldland Common reference PK18/1319/F. However, I can only determine the proposals that are before me, on their individual merits and with particular regard to the circumstances of the case. In addition, notwithstanding the layout plan provided, I have limited details and information on which to make a clear comparison. Also, I note that the Council argue that the example given involved a different scheme, with different circumstances and a different context and it is not, therefore, in their view, directly comparable. I have no substantive basis on which to consider otherwise.

13. The appellant has indicated that they would be agreeable to the use of an alternative choice of finish to the proposed building. However, I have no details before me of any alternative designs and have, therefore, determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted details.

Other Matters

14. There are benefits to the appeal proposals, including the small contribution the development would make to meeting future housing provision and the accessibility of the site to local services and facilities. These benefits are supported by policies in the development plan and the Framework. Whilst I have, therefore, attached modest weight to these benefits, they are not sufficient, either individually or cumulatively, to outweigh the significant harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR