
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2019

by I Bowen BA(Hons) BTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B1605/D/19/3223381

52 Westbury Road, Cheltenham GL53 9EW

- 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 Ian Read against the decision of Cheltenham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02409/FUL, dated 27 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2018.
 - The development proposed is demolition of garage, addition of side extension and addition of first floor. Construction of detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Westbury Road is a fairly large residential crescent accessed solely off the Old Bath Road. There is some variation in the size and type of dwellings including some two storey dwellings mainly arranged in pairs on the straight section of Westbury Road leading from the Old Bath Road. Overall, however, the street is strongly characterised by single-storey detached and semi-detached bungalows which tend to be set back from the looping highway behind small front gardens. This is particularly the case in the vicinity of the appeal property.
4. No 52 is a detached bungalow situated off a sharp bend in the road and, in contrast to many of the dwellings nearby, is set back some distance from the highway in a relatively secluded position. Despite its set-back position however, it is nonetheless still clearly visible in, and forms part of, the street scene.
5. The scheme would involve two discrete elements comprising extensions to the dwelling and the construction of a single storey detached garage in the front garden. According to the appellant's evidence, the upwards extension of the dwelling would result in an increased ridge height of 1200mm. The eaves of the building would also become higher as a result of the development. Whilst the design of the resulting building would not, in itself, be unacceptable, the addition of a first floor would introduce an appreciably taller building which is notably absent on this part of Westbury Road and which would therefore be distinctly out of step with the prevailing character of its environs.

6. On approaching from the south, the extended building would appear as a prominent and discordant building at odds with the immediately adjoining single storey properties at No 50 and 54.
7. Similarly, I saw that when viewed from the west on Westbury Road, the top of the existing southern gable is glimpsed above boundary planting and beyond the single storey roofs of Nos 48 and 50. Again, the proposed increased height and massing of the building would become noticeably more prominent from this perspective and would appear as a new and uncharacteristic feature in the street scene.
8. The development would also incorporate a single-storey side extension and in so doing would replace an existing flat-roof garage. This extension would feature a roof comprising three dual pitched sections. However, whilst this would not appear to be a design characteristic otherwise found on Westbury Road, this part of the scheme would not to my mind be unduly prominent or harmful to the area.
9. Turning to the proposed garage, the spacious nature of the front garden is such that a single storey building could be accommodated without undue harm to the street scene. However, its proposed orientation on an east-west alignment is such that it would present an unrelieved blank side elevation towards the road which would give rise to an abrupt and stark foreground view to the dwelling behind. As such, this aspect of the scheme would also be unacceptably harmful.
10. In conclusion therefore, I find that the increased ridge and eaves height and associated massing of the dwelling, together with the orientation of the proposed detached garage, would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such it would conflict with Policy SD4 of the adopted Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031 and Policy CP7 of the saved Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review (July 2006).
11. Together these policies require development to respond positively to, and respect and complement the character of, the site and its surroundings, enhancing local distinctiveness, and addressing the urban structure and grain of the locality in terms of street pattern, layout, mass and form.
12. For the same reasons, the proposal would not accord with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires the achievement of well-designed places and that developments are sympathetic to local character.
13. The Council also referred to the adopted Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (February 2008). However, my attention has not been drawn to any specific part of that document with which the proposal would fail to comply and it has not therefore been determinative to my decision.

Other Matters

14. Other concerns have been raised to the proposal by an interested party. Whilst I have carefully considered those representations, they do not alter my conclusions above and I do not therefore address them further in the decision.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian Bowen

INSPECTOR