



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 05 November 2019 by Alex O'Doherty LLB(Hons) MSc

Decision by P J Davies BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/W/19/3235490

Land at Castle View Road, Rear of 64 Dial Hill Road, Clevedon BS21 7EW

- 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 P Bellow against the decision of North Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 18/P/5104/FUL, dated 29 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of the future occupiers of the scheme, with regard to the provision of amenity space.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located in a residential cul-de-sac characterised by substantial two-storey detached houses set in generous plots. The site, being positioned near the junction between Castle View Road and Dial Hill Road, is reasonably prominent in the street scene.
5. The proposal would share some similarities with other properties on this street, in that the house would sit behind a front garden, with a generous frontage to the road, and would fall within the established building line. Proportionately however, it would appear uncharacteristically small when compared with the scale of both No 1 and the other substantially-sized houses on the street. Furthermore, the majority of the houses on Castle View Road have hipped roofs, whereas the proposal would have a gable pitch roof. Consequently, it would appear noticeably out-of-place in its immediate context.

6. It is suggested that the proposal has been designed to appear as a converted garage or an annexe, with an understated and subservient appearance. Nonetheless, large outbuildings are not typical features of the street scene and as such the proposal would appear as an individually designed dwelling out-of-scale and character with its context. Whilst No 4 Castle View Road presents as single-storey from the road, this is due to ground levels and is very much the exception, rather than the rule. Given its less prominent location within the cul-de-sac, it has not unduly influenced the immediate context of the appeal site.
7. The proposal would be compatible with the general spacing of houses in the street scene. However, relative to the existing housing pattern, the plot is considerably smaller which in turn constrains the scope of development which is possible on the site. Consequently, and notwithstanding that the depth of the plot and those of most houses in the street are not easily visible, the proposal results in a dwelling of a contrived scale and design. I do not agree that the current visual gap in the street scene appears awkward and whilst the proposal would break up the continuity of a solid fence, the visual harm arising from the proposal would be far more significant by comparison.
8. I have had regard to No 47 and No 51a Dial Hill Road, but these are proportionate to their neighbours and the context of these developments and their design credentials are quite different overall. Similarly, No 60A Dial Hill Road is set on a road where the character of the houses is more varied than at Castle View Road. Whilst the proposal shares some similarities with No 42 Kings Road in terms of design and scale, the grain of development presents as being much finer in the street scene, at that location. Accordingly, these examples are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal, which in any event has been determined on its individual merits.
9. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to Policy CS12 of the North Somerset Council Core Strategy (adopted January 2017) ('Core Strategy') which requires proposals to demonstrate sensitivity to the existing local character, and Policy CS31 of the Core Strategy, which supports housing which is of an appropriate scale and of a high quality design. The proposal would also conflict with Policies DM32 and DM37 of the North Somerset Council Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 (adopted July 2016) ('Sites and Policies Plan'), which require design solutions to seek to enhance local distinctiveness, and require any proposal for new dwellings on infill land within predominantly residential areas to not adversely affect the character of the area.

Living conditions

10. It is acknowledged that the amount of amenity space would be generally untypical of the area. However, the proposed house is intended for two-bedrooms / three-persons and accordingly the demand for amenity space would be less than for larger properties. I note the Council's concern regarding a possible 'tunnelling' effect but considering the large separation distance between the proposal and No 1 Castle View Road, the effect would not be so significant as to discourage occupiers from using that leisure space. Whilst the provision of amenity space would not be substantial, there is usable space for sitting out with adequate access, and I find that it would be adequate for the needs of future occupiers. In these circumstances there would be no material conflict with the aims of Policies DM32 and DM37 of the Sites and Policies Plan

to deliver private amenity space that is appropriate for the type of development, and to ensure that the living conditions of occupiers are not prejudiced.

Other Matters

11. The appeal site is within a settlement and there is no dispute that the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. However, the proposal would make only a very modest contribution to housing supply and choice, and similarly, the economic and social benefits would be limited. Notwithstanding that this is an accessible location for housing, the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') makes it clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. In this regard I have found that the proposal conflicts with the development plan in relation to the first main issue. The adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, and therefore my finding in relation to the first main issue stands.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. Whilst the proposal is acceptable in relation to living conditions, this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex O'Doherty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

P J Davies

INSPECTOR