



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2019

by Thomas Bristow BA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W3330/D/19/3240539 20 The Brambles, Wellington TA21 9PS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Sutton against the decision of Somerset West and Taunton Council.
 - The application Ref 43/19/0076, dated 27 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'extension above and in front of garage adjacent existing house. To form additional bedroom and en-suite, alterations to ground floor and conversion of part of garage to Kitchen'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the development proposed, as described in the banner heading above, at 20 The Brambles, Wellington TA21 9PS, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 43/19/0076, dated 27 August 2019, subject to the conditions below.

Preliminary matters

2. On 1 April 2019 Taunton Deane Borough Council merged with West Somerset Council, forming Somerset West and Taunton Council. However, until superseded, the existing development plan documents of the former Councils remain extant. Each proposal must be determined on its merits in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. The development plan in this instance includes policies of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted December 2016, the DMP). DMP policy D5 requires that extensions to dwellings integrate appropriately with local character and amenity. Those are aims common to paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), and also reflected in the National Design Guide.

Main issue

4. Against the context above, the main issue is the effect of the development proposed on local character and appearance.

Reasons

5. No 20 is a terraced dwelling, part of an established residential area at the fringes of Wellington. I understand properties here were constructed at broadly the same time following grant of planning permission in 1994 (Ref

43/94/0112). The area therefore has an ordered, planned layout. Nearby properties are typically relatively modest two storey dwellings reflecting a similar style to, and incorporating similar external materials as, No 20. Consistency is visually pleasing, and the proposal would inevitably result in a degree of change. In brief the proposal is to create a two storey side extension to No 20, projecting towards No 18, in place of an attached garage.

6. Nevertheless there is some variety in the type, scale and design of nearby properties. No 20 is the end of a terrace including Nos 22 and 24, and there are both semi-detached properties and detached properties relatively close by (Nos 35, 37, 14 and 12). Some houses face the street side-on rather than with a frontage to it, including No 31 broadly opposite. The set-back of properties from the pavement varies, and there are variously attached and detached garages. There is a stepped building line along this stretch of the Brambles, responding to the curve of the street. I also saw how a number of houses in this location had been altered over time. No 24 now features a two storey side extension in place of an original garage, as does No 12.¹ The area is therefore capable of accommodating some change without undermining its essential character.
7. The extension proposed is proportionate to No 20 as it stands; its width would be around half that of the existing property, and its maximum roof height would be slightly lower than the existing ridgeline. It would also be set back about one metre from the foremost elevation of No 20. The resulting increase in visual bulk would also be partially offset by the proposal being in place of an existing garage. The proposal would represent a relatively minor addition to the street scene, particularly when viewed in the context of the stepped building line here and the varied form and scale of nearby properties (several of which, as noted above, have been extended over time). The proposal would result in a broadly symmetrical principal elevation, and in terms of detailing and external materials would tie in well with the existing property and aesthetic of the area. I therefore conclude that the scheme would integrate appropriately with local character and appearance in accordance with the relevant provisions of DMP policy D5 and NPPF paragraph 127.

Other matters

8. The garage associated with No 22 falls between, and is attached to, that of No 20 on one side and No 18 on the other. There is space for off-street parking in front of it, as is the case of neighbouring garages. I appreciate the concerns of the occupants of No 22 that the creation of a wall along the common boundary would impede their ability to park and enter or exit a vehicle. However the foremost elevation of No 20 is well set back from the pavement edge, and the extension proposed would in turn be set a further metre in. Any enclosing effect would therefore be limited. The proposal would not alter ownership boundaries, nor result in a relationship that would differ significantly from that which may occur at present (for example if a vehicle were to be parked next to off-street provision associated with No 22, or if items were to be stored in that location from time-to-time).²

¹ Related to planning permissions Ref 43/07/0180 and 43/15/0007 respectively.

² Albeit I note that permitted development rights related to gates, fences and walls were removed via condition attached to the 1994 permission referenced above.

9. I have set out above how other properties in the area have incorporated original garages within subsequent extensions. I have also explained that it is the particular nature of the proposal and its surroundings that means the proposal would integrate appropriately with local character, and how each proposal must be considered on its merits. There is therefore no real prospect of this appeal setting an unwarranted precedent in respect of character and appearance, or to the detriment of an appropriate level of parking here (subject to conditions as set out below). No other matters are therefore of such significance so as to alter my conclusion regarding the overall acceptability of the proposal, as reasoned in respect of the main issue in this case.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, having taken account of the development plan as a whole, the approach in the NPPF, and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions below.

Conditions

11. In addition to requiring commencement within the relevant statutory period, I have imposed conditions requiring compliance with the supporting plans and that matching materials are used in the extension as in the existing building. Those are necessary so that the proposal is implemented as assessed above and integrates suitably with local character and appearance. The appellants have explained that they intend to make provision for parking of a vehicle within the garage as altered by the development proposed. Consequently it is reasonable, including with regard to ensuring appropriate off-street parking in the area relative to existing levels of provision with regard to with DMP policy D5(C.), to impose a condition requiring that such provision remains available. In imposing conditions I have had regard to the relevant provisions of the NPPF and of statute. In that context I have amended the wording of conditions proposed by the Council without altering their aims.

Thomas Bristow
INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with approved plans 0035/PL00, 0035/PL03 and 0035/PL04.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
- 4) The space proposed for vehicular parking within the development hereby permitted, served by the 'relocated garage door' as annotated on approved plan 0035/PL03, shall be kept available for such purposes at all times.