
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/19/3240688

84 Falcondale Road, Westbury, Bristol BS9 3JZ

- 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 Ciaran Willcocks against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01218/H, dated 11 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of side garage and proposed two storey side and single storey rear extension including x5 front and rear roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice. While different to that given on the application form, the description in the decision notice and appeal form more accurately describes the proposal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Unlike on the opposite side of the street, the row of semi-detached properties that the appeal site is located within have largely retained a similar design and proportions. While not always symmetrical, there is a relatively consistent overall bulk and form to the semi-detached dwellings on this side of Falcondale Road near the appeal site.
5. Dwellings and their garages often extend up to or very close to their side boundaries at ground floor level. Nonetheless, where this occurs the built form is staggered and set in from the side boundaries at first floor level. This is an important characteristic that contributes to a spacious streetscene and allow views beyond the properties.
6. The SPD¹ states that it is not intended to impose rigid controls over detailed design matters. Nevertheless, the gap between the proposed extension and side boundary of the appeal property would be considerably less than the 1m

¹ Supplementary Planning Document Number 2 A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions

the SPD suggests. Although the scheme would not create a terracing effect by itself, in this instance the side extension would uncharacteristically introduce built form at first floor level very close to the side boundary. This would erode the existing openness at first floor level in this part of Falcondale Road.

7. The side extension would have matching materials and architectural features. Nonetheless, the introduction of a 2 storey extension of this scale and its proximity to the side boundary would disrupt, and be discordant with, the existing pattern of built form in this row of dwellings. In comparison to the current openness to the streetscene the site would appear cramped.
8. The scheme would not be stepped down from the existing ridge level and back from the front elevation the full 1m suggested in the SPD. Notwithstanding this, there would be a clear and obvious break between the existing and proposed parts of the dwelling. As a result, the side extension would appear subservient to the host dwelling.
9. The side extension would, in part, have a hipped roof. This would give it a similar appearance to that of the existing dwelling. Moreover, whether as a result of changes under permitted development rights, the proposed roof form would not be at odds with the existing varied roofscape of the nearby properties it would be seen with.
10. The refusal reasons do not relate to the rear extension. Given the greater diversity to the rear elevations of nearby properties, and the scale and design of the extension, it would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.
11. I am aware of planning permission having been granted at 82 Falcondale Road during the course of this appeal. Nonetheless, the approved scheme is materially different to the appeal proposal as it is stepped in further at first floor level providing greater separation from the side boundary and retaining a wider gap than the appeal scheme would.
12. I do not have the full details of the schemes and their considerations for the other properties in the area highlighted. Nevertheless, I saw that elsewhere on Falcondale Road and the nearby streets there is less consistency to the appearance of dwellings and a tighter grain of development. Moreover, many of the examples would not be viewed in the same context as the appeal scheme and only served to demonstrate the negative effect such proposals can have on reducing the spaciousness of the streetscene.
13. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy, Policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the Bristol Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies as well as the SPD. These, in part, expect proposals to respect the broader streetscene, local pattern and grain of development and positively contribute to the character and identity of an area. It would also fail to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) where it seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

14. The proposal would allow the appellant to reconfigure the property to meet the needs of their evolving family. However, these personal benefits are not a

justification for setting aside the harm that the proposal would cause. Any benefits arising from sustainable construction and energy efficiency would be modest given the scale of the proposal.

15. The refusal reasons did not relate to impacts on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby properties. However, the absence of harm in such matters is a neutral factor and a lack of opposition for a proposal in itself is not a ground for granting planning permission.
16. The harm to the character and appearance of the area would run contrary to the environmental objective of achieving sustainable development set out in the Framework.

Conclusion

17. Therefore, for the above reason, and having taken into consideration all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR