



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020 by Alex O'Doherty LLB(Hons) MSc

Decision by Kenneth Stone BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/19/3239209

34 Oakfield Grove, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2BL

- 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 Jas Baryah against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02499/F, dated 21 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is the addition of an arched extension from 34 Oakfield Grove to meet 19 Oakfield Place, on the first and second floors.
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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.

Procedural Matters

3. The appellant submitted two photomontage illustrations of the proposed development, after the Council's decision, named: "Proposed Street View from north", and, "Proposed Street View from south". These illustrations do not substantially alter the nature of the proposal, and I am satisfied that the interests of any parties would not be prejudiced by the illustrations being considered in this appeal. Therefore, the additional illustrations have been taken into account in my consideration of this appeal.
4. At the time of my site visit, No 19 Oakfield Place contained two storeys with a flat roof, whereas the existing plans and elevations submitted for this appeal show a building with a roof structure on a building rising to three storeys. However, the appellant has stated that No 19 is in the same ownership as the appeal property, and I note the appellant's reference to a recent planning application¹ which would replace No 19 with a house to match No 18A Oakfield Place in form and architectural design. Therefore, I have assessed the appeal proposal on the basis of the proposed plans, which show No 19 with a third storey consisting of a roof with two windows.

¹ Local Planning Authority reference: 18/03288/F

Main Issue

5. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area, and the setting of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a three-storey (excluding the basement but including the attic) end-of-terrace late Victorian building with a pitched roof which fronts the street. Whilst the property is English Revival style, it is set within a Georgian street scene. A distinctive feature is its chamfered corner, which is adjacent to a small courtyard space which sits between No 34 Oakfield Grove and No 19 Oakfield Place. Due to its eclectic architectural features, the appeal property contrasts with the adjacent buildings with their predominantly Georgian architecture, including mostly uniform elongated windows.
7. The proposal is to extend both the second and third storeys at the side with an arched link extension over the courtyard gateway between No 34 and No 19. The roof form of the proposal would be set at a different ridge height to each of the roofs at the respective terraces, resulting in a lack of adequate integration. The design of the proposed mansard roof would most directly relate to the new roof at No 19. Even so, the upper-most part of the mansard roof would jut out above the ridge line of No 19, creating a discordant feature in the street scene. The rectangular window would not be set sufficiently in-line with the similar-style windows at No 19 and No 18A Oakfield Place, causing it to appear out-of-place in the street scene.
8. The oriel window, set above a shallow arch, would be an overly-large and distinctly new and alien feature in the street scene, that would not reflect the existing architectural motifs which contribute to the character of the area. Whilst it has been argued that the proposal would be physically subservient, it would not be visually subservient to the appeal property, due to the large overall mass and over-scaled oriel window.
9. I concur with the appellant that the existing gap in the terrace with the chamfer corner creates interest and intrigue in the street scene. Whilst the proposal would be set back from the building line and would create some enclosure and definition to the gap, the proposal's harmful effect on the street scene would not add to that sense of interest and intrigue. The appellant made reference to a nearby similar covered way, but as no details have been provided, it has not been possible to make a comparison.
10. It is recognised that the proposal would create some physical continuity in the street scene, and also that the design ethos aims to both reflect and learn from the English Revival of late medieval and Tudor themes, and to respond to the moderate eccentricity of the architecture at the appeal property by being in keeping with its late Victorian detailing. Nevertheless, the overall effect of the proposal would be to harm the appearance of the area by the bridging of two architecturally contrasting buildings, with significantly different roof forms, with an unduly distinct extension. The retention of a sense of separation of the terraces from street views would not overcome this harm.
11. The appeal site is in the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area ('WRCA'). As stated in the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area Enhancement Statement

(1993), the significance of the heritage asset derives in part from the varied elevational use of classical architectural motifs. The appeal site is situated outside the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area ('CHCA'), but due to its location very near the edge of the conservation area, is within its setting. The Clifton & Hotwells Character Appraisal & Management Proposals document (June 2010) notes that the CHCA contains an extremely high quality of built fabric and townscape. This contributes, in part, to the significance of the CHCA as a heritage asset.

12. Given the harm that I have identified, it follows that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the WRCA. The proposal would also undermine the contribution that the setting currently makes to the quality of the built fabric within the CHCA. Whilst the harm that would be caused to the significance of the conservation areas would be less than substantial, this harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellant has not put forward any public benefits, and considering the considerable importance and great weight that needs to be given to the WRCA and the effect on the CHCA through the harmful development within its setting, the harm that I have identified to the conservation areas has not been overcome. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the WRCA, and the setting of the CHCA.
13. The proposal is contrary to Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework: Core Strategy (adopted June 2011) ('Core Strategy') which provides that development in Bristol will be expected to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. The proposal would conflict with Policy BCS22 of the Core Strategy which provides that development proposals will safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including conservation areas.
14. The proposal conflicts with Policy DM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies: Local Plan (adopted July 2014) ('Local Plan') which provides that extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be expected to respect the siting, scale, form, proportions, materials, details and the overall design and character of the host building, its curtilage and the broader street scene. Conflict with Policy DM31 of the Local Plan would occur, this provides that development within or which would affect the setting of a conservation area will be expected to preserve or, where appropriate, enhance those elements which contribute to their special character or appearance.
15. The proposal is not in accordance with the guidance given in the Clifton & Hotwells Character Appraisal & Management Proposals document (June 2010) that unsympathetic alterations should be resisted. The proposal conflicts with paragraph 127 c) of the National Planning Policy Framework which provides that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The Council has referred to section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in its decision notice, but as the proposal does not involve the demolition, alteration or extension of a listed building, nor would the proposed development affect the setting of a

listed building, section 16(2) is not relevant to my consideration of the proposal.

Other Matters/Planning Balance

16. A number of factors have been cited in support of the proposal, including: that the property is not listed; that appropriate materials would be used; that the current access onto Oakfield Grove would be unaffected; that the property provides suitable accommodation for residents without cars, due to its sustainable location (including being readily accessible by public transport); that the proposal would retain sufficient usable external private space for future occupiers; and that the proposal is acceptable in relation to any impacts on the living conditions of the occupiers of the appeal property and neighbouring occupiers. These factors are not in dispute and carry neutral weight in my consideration of the proposal.
17. The proposal would improve the living accommodation available at the property, increasing the sustainability of the building. However, as this would mainly be a private benefit, this has been given very limited weight.
18. In conclusion, I find that the matters advanced in support of the proposal, do not, either individually or collectively, outweigh the harm identified nor the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. 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

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

Kenneth Stone

INSPECTOR