



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2020

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W3330/D/20/3251648

106 Priory Avenue, Taunton TA1 1YB

- 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 Adam Bradford against the decision of Somerset West and Taunton Council.
 - The application Ref 38/20/0075, dated 24 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of two dormer windows to the front of 106 Priory Avenue, Taunton.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development field on the original application form seeks to provide justification for the proposed development. Therefore, in the interests of clarity and brevity, I have used the description of development from the Council's decision notice in the banner heading.
3. Notwithstanding the description of development, the proposed drawings show dormer windows to the front and rear of the existing dwelling. The Council explain that the property benefits from extant planning permission¹ for the erection of dormer windows to the rear of the existing dwelling. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling with a bay window and porch on the front elevation. The property has a traditional appearance with a brick exterior under a red tile pitched roof.
6. The surrounding area has an urban residential character and Priory Avenue is a long road with a variety of property types present. Along the southern stretch of Priory Avenue where the appeal site is located, the street is characterised by

¹ Council Ref: 38/2006/118

two-storey semi-detached dwellings which overlook Victoria Park to the rear. Whilst many of the properties feature later alterations, such as porches and frontage parking, the consistent two-storey scale of the dwellings, pitched roof forms and the use of traditional materials, such as brick, results in a design balance and symmetry which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

7. It is proposed to erect two dormer windows to the front of the property in a central position on the existing roof slope. The proposed dormer windows would be constructed from materials to match the existing house and would have a pitched roof form.
8. Despite the use of matching materials and the pitched roof design, the proposed dormer windows would have a stark and jarring appearance when viewed in the context of the host building and nearby buildings, which typically do not feature dormer windows to the front roof slopes. Therefore, the proposal would appear as a prominent and intrusive structure within the local roofscape. Consequently, the proposed dormer windows would be an unsympathetic addition to the existing dwelling, which would unacceptably diminish the architectural integrity of the host building and cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
9. My attention has been drawn to an existing dormer window at the front of No 112 Priory Avenue. Whilst I recognise that the existing development is situated near to the appeal site, overall this type of alteration on the front roof slope is the exception rather than the norm on this long road. In any event, the development at No 112 does not provide justification to allow further harm, which would result from the appeal proposal.
10. In terms of the wider examples referred to by the appellant, which includes a flatted development located on the corner of Priory Avenue and Winchester Street, which contains front dormer windows, and other traditional properties with gable frontages, I observed on my site visit that the developments are located a considerable distance away from the appeal site. Such development is not seen in the context of the appeal site and does not therefore contribute directly to the aforementioned and distinctive characteristics of the local area.
11. The Council have raised concerns about the impact of the proposed development on the visual qualities of Toneway, which is a main approach road into and out of Taunton located about 200 metres to the north east of the appeal site. Given the separation distance between the appeal site and the approach road, the degree of screening provided by the mature trees located on the highway embankment to the north of the appeal site, in addition to the relatively moderate scale of the proposed development, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the visual qualities of the Toneway approach road. Consequently, the proposal would accord with Policy D2 of the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (December 2016) (the 'DMP') which states that development which would harm the visual qualities of routes into and out of Taunton and Wellington will not be permitted. Despite this, the harm identified above is sufficient to justify dismissing the appeal.

12. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the development does not accord with Policy D5 of the DMP which, amongst other things, requires extensions to residential properties to avoid harm to the form and character of the dwelling. In addition, the proposal does not accord with Policy DM1(d) of the Adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011- 2028 (September 2012) which requires new development to avoid harm to the character and appearance of the existing building and streetscene.
13. Accordingly, the proposal would also be inconsistent with paragraph 127(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development to be sympathetic to the local character.
14. My attention has been drawn to the Government's 'Planning for the future' White Paper², which includes proposals to introduce new rules to encourage building upwards. Whilst this may be the case, the document advises that any such works should be in line with local character. As set out above, I have found that the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

15. I note that there have not been any objections from interested third parties. However, this does not outweigh or alter my conclusions on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Christopher Miell

INSPECTOR

² Planning for the Future – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (March 2020)