



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 May 2020

by Jonathan Hockley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/W/19/3240013

14 Glebe Road, Newent GL18 1BS

- 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 Michael Panting against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council.
 - The application Ref P1153/19/FUL, dated 22 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'erection of a 2 bed (attached) dwelling with associated works (Demolition/removal of existing Chalet and ancillary outbuildings) (amended resubmission)'
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This decision is issued in accordance with section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 17th June 2020.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are as follows:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for future residents.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies to the west of Newent town centre in an area of reasonably dense residential development. Glebe Road is a fairly long street largely lined with blocks of semi-detached and terraced homes. Housing is largely red brick with red tiled gabled roofs, although there are examples of blocks with strips of render and some hipped roofs. There is a regularity to the street scene with uniform blocks of houses and, aside from some single storey front extensions, little variation. No 14 Glebe Road lies approximately halfway up the road on its eastern side and is located roughly on the corner of the road with Blackmans Close in a prominent position, particularly when viewed from the south.

4. No 14 is the western end terrace in a block of 4 houses, with the eastern 2 houses staggered in the row from the western 2 properties. At this end of Glebe Road, houses have generous largely open front gardens which helps contribute to a feeling of openness in the area, despite the density of much of the housing. At the time of my visit No 14 has a dense high conifer hedge lining the boundaries of this front garden, at odds with this feeling of openness. Vehicular access can be made on the western side of the property via a driveway and a large outhouse/chalet is located on the south side of this access and to the side of the property, largely filling in the gap between the gable end of No 14 and the conifer hedge. Plans also show some pigeon sheds along the west side of the garden, although these had been removed at the time of my visit.
5. The proposal seeks to remove the large outhouse and conifer hedge to construct a two-storey extension to the side of No 14 to form a new 2-bedroom dwelling. The property would have a hipped roof and lower ridge line to No 14, with a small single storey hipped roof element to front. A roughly triangular shaped garden would be available to the front with a small square garden to rear.
6. While the design of the property is largely subservient to the existing terrace, by extending on to the end of the terraced block, the proposal would visually introduce a reasonably new form of development to the street scene where no other similar development is visible or present, an effect accentuated by the drop in ridgeline from the original property to the new proposed dwelling. This would be made more noticeable by the proposed hipped roof, although I note in this context that the appellant has submitted alternative plans for a gable roof.
7. In an area characterised by large open gardens and uniform blocks of development, and in such a conspicuous position, the construction of the property, the western corner of which would be close to the footpath, would appear out of place within the homogeneity of the surroundings. As a result the proposal would appear somewhat forced, cramped and wedged in to the street scape, causing harm to the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the front and back gardens would be fairly small and out of character in the area, further drawing attention to the proposed dwelling. In this context I do not consider that the design of the proposal when combined with the prominence of the plot would create punctuation or a statement in the street scene; more the proposal would appear somewhat forced and out of context within the surrounding grain of development.
8. The appellant notes that the proposal would be 'considerably smaller than the Chalet annex and outbuilding' that it would replace. However, on my visit the marked pigeon sheds were no longer in evidence. Moreover, the chalet is of single storey construction and largely hidden from the road due to the high hedges. While the removal of the conifers and replacement with a smaller hedge would improve the appearance of the area, this would not outweigh the harm caused by the proposal itself.
9. The Council's Residential Design Guide (RDG) dates from 1998. This states that the Council will appraise whether the setting of the development has been considered and whether the site characteristics have influenced the design and layout of the proposal as general criteria to assess schemes. In this case I do

not consider that the proposal would reflect local distinctiveness and the plot size and footprint would not relate to the local context, a fact which would be made more noticeable given the prominence of the site in the street scene. I am also referred to a diagram on page 49 of this document showing an extension to a gable ended property. However, this appears to me to show an extension to the rear of the property away from the roadway as being suitable, as opposed to an extension of the linear form of the property as is proposed in this case.

10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what planning should achieve, and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that planning decisions should ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment setting. The proposal would be contrary to these objectives.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to policies CSP1 and CSP4 of the Core Strategy¹, which together state that the design of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and reinforce the existing settlement pattern. The scheme would also be contrary to policy AP.4 of the Allocations Plan² which states that new development will be expected to be of a high quality design making a positive contribution to the design quality of the area in which it is proposed, by supporting a strong sense of place and taking account of local character. As above, the proposal would also be contrary to the Framework and the RDG.

Living Conditions

12. The proposed property would have, according to the Council's figures, some 45m² of garden space to the front of the property, with a further area allocated to the rear of the building. The area is characterised by reasonably generous front gardens, but it is clear from the location plan provided that many of the houses in the locality also have long private rear gardens. This allows for the front gardens to remain, in the majority, reasonably open as dwellings have access to private rear amenity areas.
13. The row of properties that the appeal site is located upon is slightly more restricted than many of the surrounding plots, with rear gardens of a more limited length than other houses nearby as a result of being set on the corner of Glebe Road and Blackmans Close, and also due to a footpath which runs behind the row of houses. From the location plan it also appears that such rear space is shallower at the end where the appeal site is located. As noted above, the front garden to No 14 at present is private by virtue of the conifer hedge, and the adjacent hedge to No 12's garden is also high.
14. The proposal would remove this hedge and plant a hornbeam hedge to the new front garden of the proposed property. The RDG states gardens averaging 100m² per family dwelling on the private side of the house to the rear of the plot should effectively be provided. However, in this case given the current car

¹ Core Strategy Adopted Version, Forest of Dean District Council, February 2012

² Allocations Plan 2006 to 2026, Forest of Dean District Council, June 2018

parking area I find it difficult to envisage that the current rear garden for No 14, or indeed its attached neighbour, is 100m². This may be why both properties have chosen to enclose their front gardens. While the sum total of the garden for the new proposed dwelling (or for the redefined No 14) would be less than 100m², it would still provide cumulatively adequate space for some play, sitting out and hanging out washing and would likely provide reasonable amenity space for a small 2 bedroom dwelling as proposed.

15. Therefore, and notwithstanding my comments above regarding the effect of the reduced garden areas on the character and appearance of the area, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for future residents. I am not convinced that the policies referred to in this instance, policies CSP.1 and CSP.4 of the Core Strategy, as well as policy AP.4 of the Allocations Plan are directly relevant to the issue of amenity for future occupants, but nevertheless in this context I consider that the scheme would provide high levels of amenity for future users and hence in this context would be of a high quality of design, as required by such policies. The proposal would also comply in this respect with the Framework.

Other matters and conclusion

16. In providing a new property, the proposal would make a small contribution to meeting general housing need and provide economic and social benefits through the construction and future use of the property. The appellant also makes reference to the housing land supply of the Council and the Housing Delivery Test 2019, in positing their view that overall the Council does not have a five-year supply of deliverable housing land. However, even if this were the case I am of the view that the adverse impacts of the proposal that I have identified significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.
17. Furthermore, I consider that the environmental harm that the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the area would outweigh the economic and social benefits of the scheme and therefore the proposal would not constitute sustainable development. In this way the proposal would also be contrary to policy AP.1 of the Policies Plan, which states that in assessing planning applications the primary consideration will be whether or not the development proposed is sustainable with the overall aim of improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
18. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR