
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2020

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/W/20/3248746

342 Bloomfield Road, Bloomfield, Bath BA2 2PB

- 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 and Mrs M Purcells against the decision of Bath & North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 19/05260/FUL, dated 4 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is for one dwelling house with associated front and rear landscaping, demolition of existing garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the area including the setting of the Bath World Heritage Site.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located to the rear of 342 Bloomfield Road and has a frontage onto Weatherly Road, a residential street comprising uniformly designed bungalows. These dwellings follow a consistent building line and are positioned within modest sized plots. A striking feature of the bungalows are the similarly proportioned hipped roofs and the gabled front bay windows. As a result, the bungalows have a regular rhythm of development, are attractively designed, and in addressing the street scene, make a positive contribution to it.
4. The hipped roofs of the dwellings facing Bloomfield Road can be seen from Weatherly Road, and whilst they are two storey dwellings, they are consistent in terms of their roof profile with the existing bungalows therefore contributing to the uniformity of the surrounding area's roofscape.
5. The site also falls within the Bath World Heritage Site (WHS), whose significant physical and cultural attributes consist of Roman remains, honey coloured stone buildings, many Georgian buildings and Neo-classical architecture. These features contribute towards a high-quality built environment and help define the character and appearance of the WHS.
6. Facing onto Weatherly Road, the pitched roof design of the proposed dwelling, would contrast markedly with the design and profile of the numerous hipped

roofs belonging to the surrounding dwellings, appearing stark and unfamiliar in this context. The proposal would therefore have a disruptive and incongruous presence in the street that would in turn impose harmfully on the regularity of the hipped roofs which are a defining feature of the surrounding area.

7. I note that the street frontage that the proposed dwelling would relate to, primarily consists of single storey garages serving dwellings fronting Bloomfield Road. However, there is a bungalow a short distance to the north, along the same frontage, that is consistent with its surroundings in terms of the design and scale of its roof. Moreover, I do not consider that the presence of a few smaller, utilitarian outbuildings is sufficient to justify a different design in this regard.
8. It is contested that the proposed development should not slavishly follow surrounding features, while it is an example of high-quality contemporary design that is encouraged by the Framework. I agree there is a place for innovative design that is in context with its surroundings, but in this instance, I am of the view that the design proposed would be harmful for the reasons set out above.
9. The proposed dwelling would be set back from Weatherly Road in a similar manner to the adjacent bungalows, whilst incorporating a rear amenity space that is also comparable in terms of its depth and width. Furthermore, the proposal is positioned close to its side boundaries, in a similar fashion to the bungalows along Weatherly Road. Accordingly, the proposal is consistent with the arrangement and layout of existing dwellings in the area and would not be harmful in this respect.
10. The WHS encompasses much of the city of Bath. The main features surrounding buildings share and contribute to the special character of the WHS is the use of honey coloured Bath stone. The proposal would be constructed using reconstituted Bath stone and as such would be consistent with the surroundings in this regard, such that it would not cause harm to, or loss of the special architectural, cultural or historic interest which contribute to the outstanding universal value of the WHS and its setting. The integrity of the WHS would be maintained, in this respect and the proposal accords with Policy HE1 of the Bath and North Somerset Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan 2017 (Placemaking Plan). However, this does not alter my concerns on the effect the proposed dwelling would have on the character and appearance of the area.
11. I found that the proposed dwelling would not harm the WHS, whilst having a layout that is consistent with the surrounding pattern of development. Nevertheless, it would incorporate a roof design that would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies D2, D3 and D5 of the Placemaking Plan, where they require proposals to respond positively to the site context, including roofscapes, while not harming local character and distinctiveness. The proposal would also be contrary to the Framework which requires development proposals to be sympathetic to local character.
12. The Council's decision notice has referred to Policy D4 of the Placemaking Plan in their reason for refusal. However, I have not referred to this in my conclusions on the main issue, as that policy relates to the separate matters of streets and spaces.

Other Matters

13. I have considered the scheme's benefits which include the development of under-utilised land and the contribution the proposal would make to the housing stock. Yet, these do not outweigh the harm I have identified, and the resultant conflict with development plan policies.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

R.E. Jones

INSPECTOR