



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/20/3255817

27 Baileys Mead Road, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1AE

- 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 R Akbar against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00056/H, dated 7 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2020
 - The development proposed is erection of a two-storey extension, roof alteration and rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host house and area.
3. Although not a reason for refusal, it is clear from the information before me that the site is both within, and could have an effect on, a conservation area. Accordingly, I consider the effect of the proposal on the integrity of the conservation area to be a main issue.

Reasons

Character and appearance of host house and area

4. The appeal site is a two-storey, detached house on a small, modern housing estate. The host house is both adjacent to a private lane and located at a curve in the road, which means that the front and side elevation are prominent on approach. The open parkland associated with Grade II listed 'Beech House' is opposite the appeal site.
5. The proposal would raise the roof height by nearly 1.2 metres to create a third storey, which would encompass a two-storey rear extension of approximately 2.5 m depth. The current roof pitch would remain but would continue beyond the current ridge to a higher apex. Policy DM30 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2014) ('SADMP') requires that extensions, including the form of the roof, should be physically and visually subservient to the host building. In not being subservient, the proposed extension does not meet this aspect of the policy.

6. Houses on the estate are all two-storey and the proposal would be higher than the surrounding buildings. The roof would be atypically higher than the front gable, which would draw attention to the difference in roof height with other houses on the estate. I accept that ease of comparison of roof heights is reduced because the estate is built on a slight slope, the configuration of the pitched roofs is varied and the pattern of housing is non-uniform. On this basis, I consider that there is scope to re-configure the shape of the roof, but as designed, the extent of the proposals would appear discordant with the overall pattern.
7. The new building would appear significantly bulkier than others in the area, both in height and when viewed from the exposed side elevation. While houses on the estate are designed to have varied structure, they are of reasonably standard bulk and proportionate to each other. This contributes to the character of the estate and I consider that the introduction of a noticeably bulkier building would be discordant and harmful to this rhythm.
8. The stated intention of the appellant is to produce a structure that does not read as an extension, but rather appears as a single, larger house and I find that there is merit in this argument. I consider that the extension is well designed in reflecting the form and materials of the original house, and I concur that the house would appear as a larger, single whole building. On this basis, I do not consider that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host house.
9. The appellant has an extant permission¹ to build a two-storey rear extension and recommends that the current proposal is an improvement on the earlier scheme because the angle of the roof plane is not lost. I accept that this may be an improvement if the effect on the character and appearance of the host house was the only consideration. However, for the reasons above, local policy is that extensions should be subservient, and I have found that there would be harm to the character and appearance of the wider area from the new proposal.
10. I have also noted that the appellant considers that the current proposal would utilise more appropriate finishing materials. As the Council have not objected to either scheme on this basis, I have not considered this matter further.
11. The proposal is in conflict with Policies BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted June 2011)('CS') and Policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the SADMP, which together require that development contributes positively to an area's character and identity, and respects the design of the street scene.

Conservation area

12. The house is situated in the large Stapleton and Frome Valley Conservation Area (CA). The Stapleton and Frome Valley CA Map and Statement from the 'Bristol Local Plan' before me is undated, but as it is referenced by both parties, I have accepted its validity. The statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area and this is a matter of considerable weight.

¹ 17/04687/H (November 2017)

13. The spire of Holy Trinity Church is cited in the CA statement as one of the most important views in the CA. Views of Beech House from the appeal site are obscured by a stand of large trees, but the path immediately opposite offers a wide vista from Beech House behind, to the distant steeple of Holy Trinity church rising above the host house. Raising the roof would intrude into this important view. Although this would be a small change, it is nevertheless harmful and would therefore not conserve and enhance the CA.
14. The architectural character identified as characteristic in the CA is described as predominantly rural in origin, including the materials and disposition of streets. On this basis, I am satisfied that changes to the houses on this estate would not harm the overall architectural character of the CA.
15. In addition, there is no suggestion that the site would harm the setting of listed Beech House, and from my observations during the site visit, no external changes would be visible from the listed building, and I therefore concur with this conclusion.
16. For the reasons above the proposal would have a negative effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset. I do not consider the overall harm to the conservation area to be 'substantial' and I have therefore applied the test in paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The construction would generate a small short-term contribution to the economy. However, I do not consider that this minor public benefit would outweigh the harm identified above.
17. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA and therefore conflicts with Policies BCS22 of the CS and DM31 of the SADMP, which together aim to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

Other matters

18. The appellant has raised concerns about the Council's management of the case. This is a matter between the appellant and the Council, and I have therefore not considered it further.
19. I have also noted reference to a wind study, but as this does not form a reason for refusal and I am dismissing the appeal, I have not considered it further.

Conclusions

20. For the reasons above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR