



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/20/3255138

50 Church Leaze, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 9SZ

- 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 GBuild Ltd against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04357/F, dated 4 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of one dwelling, parking and ancillary development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by GBuild Ltd against Bristol City Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural matters

3. The application site was not originally advertised as affecting the character and appearance of the nearby Shirehampton Conservation Area, as required by Regulation 5A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990. The Council confirmed that this has since been undertaken with a deadline of 28 October 2020.

Preliminary matters

4. The Council has confirmed that they no longer wish to pursue the second reason for refusal relating to living standards of future residents. I have therefore not considered this matter further.

Main issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Bristol Garden Suburb.

Reasons

Background

6. The appeal site is within the Bristol Garden Suburb (also referred to as the Shirehampton Garden Suburb), which was added to the Local List of important historic buildings on 11 June 2020. Paragraph 197 of the National Planning

Policy Framework (the 'Framework') states that in weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment is required having regard to the significance of the heritage asset.

7. The Council is proposing to extend the boundary of the nearby Shirehampton Conservation Area ('CA') in part to include the Bristol Garden Suburb. Public consultation on the revised Conservation Area Character Assessment is due to finish on 23 November 2020. A limited number of key local organisations have already had the opportunity to comment and have endorsed the proposal. I therefore consider the Garden Suburb to be a non-designated heritage asset of high significance.

Character and appearance

8. The appeal site is within a group of 4 early 20th century L-shaped buildings framing the crossroads at the junction of Church Leaze and Springfield Avenue. The host building mirrors the building on the opposite side of Church Leaze and this is the most important relationship for the purposes of comparison, rather than the other pair, which are of subtly different structure and layout. I observed at the site visit that this symmetry is clearly legible from the public domain and I consider it a fundamental characteristic of the architectural set piece. The proposal would cause one arm of the L-shape to be significantly longer than the building opposite, and the essential symmetry and balance would be noticeably and harmfully lost.
9. The proposed addition would interrupt the original building line by sitting forward of No 50 and No 1 Church Leaze, as illustrated in Section 4.1 of the Bristol City Council's 'Conservation Recommendation' (20 January 2020). This would result in discordant building lines, which would exacerbate the harm caused by the loss of symmetry.
10. The proposal is to retain a small gap between the side of the house and the highway. The paired house opposite is clearly set back from the highway, and the gap is large enough to contain a hedge and shrubbery, creating a sense of green, open space. The small size of the remaining gap at the appeal site would lead to this side of Springfield Avenue feeling enclosed and cramped, which is not in keeping with the open character of the Garden Suburb.
11. Several of the houses in the group have had small porches added. However, the proposed porch is a substantial and solid structure compared to these, which would appear bulky and incongruent when compared to both the existing and original character of the grouping.
12. Boundaries in the Garden Suburb are typically hedged and the quadrangle at the front of the houses would originally have had communal green lawns. The garden that would have existed at the appeal site has largely been replaced with an extended driveway and this loss would be further exacerbated by replacement with a house and installation of a bin store on one of the few remaining planted areas.
13. The other houses in the grouping have been extended and one has had cladding added to the side elevation. However, with the exception of modest front porches, the extensions are all to the rear and they do not disrupt the characteristic layout of the prominent frontage and the relationship between the houses. Notwithstanding this, the proposed development is significantly

larger in footprint than any of these extensions and would have a commensurate effect on the significance of the building.

14. The architectural style of housing reflects the Arts and Crafts movement, and gables and dormer windows are key features. These would be respected by the development, as would the proposed render and colouring. However, this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb identified above.
15. There would be benefits from increasing housing supply and the contribution this would bring to the local economy. However, as this is a single dwelling, the benefit would be small and would not outweigh the harm to the non-designated heritage asset and identified above.
16. Policy DM31 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2014) ('SADMP') requires that locally important heritage assets are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced having regard to their significance. For the reasons above, I consider that the significance of the asset is high and that harm to the asset would be caused, and the proposal is therefore in conflict with this policy. I also conclude that the proposal conflicts with Policies DM26 and DM27 of the SADMP, which together require that development respects building lines and local rhythms, patterns and features.

Other matters

17. I note the intention to use the house as a family dwelling and elsewhere in the submissions that it would be affordable for first time buyers. Specific local policy support for either of these outcomes as a benefit is not before me, and no agreement or evidence has been provided to secure this outcome. I have therefore not given this factor any weight in the planning balance.
18. I have noted reference to the potential for smaller scale development under Permitted Development rights. However, no details of alternatives nor clear intent to pursue these are before me, and I have therefore not attributed weight to this as a potential fallback position.
19. The appeal site is approximately 300 meters away from the existing Shirehampton CA and only the church spire can be seen in the distance. I am satisfied that the two are visually separated by intervening development, and that the character and appearance of the CA would not be harmed by the proposal.

Conclusions

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

B Davies

INSPECTOR