



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2020

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/W/20/3257535

6 Flatwoods Crescent, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AH

- 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 Ms Ruth Todd against the decision of Bath & North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00429/FUL, dated 3 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of one, single storey two-bedroom self-build bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed bungalow on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site encompasses part of the rear garden of No 6 Flatwoods Crescent, while having a frontage onto Flatwoods Road. The appeal site is predominantly surrounded by two storey dwellings with pitched and hipped roofs, that are largely consistent in terms of their scale, appearance and use of materials. These dwellings are positioned within medium sized plots that comprise attractively landscaped front and rear gardens. The consistency in terms of the scale and appearance of the dwellings, as well as their proportionate and coherent plot layouts have a positive effect on the character and appearance of the area.
4. The proposed bungalow would have a constricted position very close to the site's rear and south facing side boundaries. Together with the dwelling's L-shape footprint, the presence of, parked cars, bin storage and garden paraphernalia such as outdoor seating, the proposal would convey a crowded appearance that would not reflect the more spacious arrangement of dwelling plots in the vicinity. The dwelling would therefore appear unacceptably discordant in its context.
5. Positioned at a lower level to the street and having a shallow pitched roof, the proposed bungalow would have a squat appearance within the plot when viewed from Flatwoods Road. This would contrast markedly with the scale of

the surrounding two storey dwellings and the appearance of their pitched and hipped roofs, to the extent that it would appear out of kilter in the street. Whilst attempts have been made to make the dwelling appear less conspicuous when viewed from Flatwoods Road, its discordant design and expansive roof profile, relative to the plot's width would nevertheless be seen from Flatwoods Road rising above the new boundary enclosure, through gaps in the proposed planting and new driveway. It would be more visible still from the first-floor windows of nearby properties, particularly, Nos 8 and 10 Flatwoods Road and No 5 Flatwoods Crescent. Therefore, the proposal would appear harmful when viewed in relation to the prevailing building typology of the surrounding area.

6. The majority of dwellings in the vicinity of the appeal site comprise two-storey properties, however, there are a small number of single storey dwellings nearby, namely Nos 48, 49 and 50 Flatwoods Road. These differ to the appeal proposal in having a balanced arrangement near the corner of Flatwoods Road and Chedworth Close, while following a consistent building line. Moreover, in contrast to the proposed bungalow, they are centrally positioned within their respective plots with more spacious and equally proportioned front and rear gardens. These bungalows also incorporate roof forms that are consistent with the surrounding two storey dwellings. There are other single storey dwellings further afield, however, the character of the immediate area in which they are situated is more varied compared to that around the appeal site.
7. The appellant has provided some examples of house to plot ratios in the area that are comparable with the appeal proposal. However, these differ in terms of the characteristics of the space around the dwellings. In any event, the appeal proposal has been considered on its individual merits.
8. The proposed bungalow would have external walls built using brick and timber cladding. Although timber cladding is not commonplace in the area, it would nevertheless be moderately used in this case. Furthermore, if I were allowing this appeal the external brick could be conditioned in a colour to match the surrounding properties.
9. A new stone wall and fence along the boundary with Flatwoods Road is proposed. This would replace the existing dilapidated fence while also having an improved appearance in the street. Despite this benefit, the new means of enclosure would not overcome the significant harm I have found in respect of the proposed development.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the requirements of Policies D2 and D4 of the Bath and North East Somerset Placemaking Plan, adopted 2017 (Local Plan). These seek, amongst other matters, for proposals to positively respond to the site context in terms of local character, spacing, layout and building forms.
11. I have not referred to Policy HE1 of the Local Plan in my conclusion on the main issue as this relates to the historic environment, a matter which the Council did not specifically raise as a concern in refusing the application.

Other Matters

12. The environmental benefits of the proposed bungalow's sedum roof and solar panels are acknowledged, while I note development plan policies encourage

this type of construction. However, these positive aspects of the scheme do not overcome my concerns, in respect of the proposal's impact on the area's character and appearance.

13. I have been referred to the appeal site's favourable location close to public transport connections and accessible routes for cycling and walking, that lead to nearby shops and services. The locational benefits of the proposal in this regard are recognised, however, these are modest and would not overcome the concerns on the main issue.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

R. E. Jones

INSPECTOR