



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2020

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/20/3256180

26 Woodwell Road, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 9UW

- 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 HIRO Land Ltd against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00089/F, dated 8 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of extension to create a single dwellinghouse with associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Main issue

3. The proposed development would comprise features that would match with the existing semi-pair from which it would extend, including brickwork, roof tiles, the front door surround, fenestration design and chimney. In continuing the front building line of No 26 it would also not encroach beyond the existing building line of that side of the road. However, despite the proposed downpipe to visually demarcate the proposed dwelling from that existing, the significant continuation of the front building elevation over two storeys would substantially disrupt the balance and symmetry of the existing semi-pair of dwellings. This would be further highlighted by the noticeably narrower frontage proposed compared with the abutting Woodwell Road facing element of No 26, with fenestration that would only be on one side of the front door as opposed to both.
4. St. Bernard's Road, despite not being a main through road, is nevertheless a key estate road which comprises semi-detached and terraced properties exhibiting a distinctive and pleasing degree of continuity in terms of architectural detailing, use of materials and symmetry. Although there are various cases where extensions have been added to the sides of properties, these are mainly only single storey subservient features, often set back slightly from the front elevation. Indeed the other half of the semi-pair relating to the appeal proposal, 46 St. Bernard's Road, has such a side extension as does

- 27 Woodwell Road on the opposite corner of the road junction, which do not dominate or significantly detract from the original symmetry of the semi-pairs. The same is the case with the albeit more prominent front porch extension to No 46.
5. The site relates to one of four distinctly designed triple fronted semi-pairs of properties on each of the four corners of a prominent junction approximately mid-way along St. Bernard's Road which is otherwise unbroken by other roads along its significant length. Those four semi-pairs are angled differently to follow the lines of the road junction, and that relating to the appeal is clearly raised above road level due to rising land. Nevertheless, and despite the varying sized gaps between those semi-pairs and adjacent dwellings and the single storey additions referred to previously, the four pairs retain a strong degree of integrity in terms of their balanced appearance, continuity and unity seen in the lines of their main front elevations, along with their architectural detailing.
 6. The proposed dwelling, despite retaining a noticeable, albeit much reduced, degree of separation from the dwelling at No 24 due to the existing wide gap, would be clearly seen in the above context, being attached to No 26, and that of the distinctive dwelling designs of St. Bernard's Road generally from the vicinity of the Woodwell Road junction.
 7. From the northern and southern approaches, along Woodwell Road, the proposal would be seen in the context of noticeably differently designed buildings particularly north of No 25 on that side, including a proposed new development immediately to the north of Nos 21/23 once built, and more distantly on the other side. However, it would still also be clearly seen as associated with those distinctive four corner semi-pairs around the junction with St. Bernard's Road.
 8. I acknowledge that the site is not located within a Conservation Area or designated protected landscape. However, in the above context, the proposed dwelling, due to the substantial disruption that would be caused to the balance and symmetry of the existing semi-pair of dwellings, would be a dominant, jarring and incompatible feature of the local street scene that would not respect the established and distinctive pattern and rhythm of development along St. Bernard's Road and at this road junction in particular. It would also stand out all the more due to its raised position above the road level.
 9. The proposal would be seen differently from the footpath to the rear of the site to the west, from where only the rear elevation would be visible and mainly in the context of the rear elevations of other neighbouring properties, and then only partially due to intervening fences and hedges. It would not therefore be a prominent feature from that vantage point. However, that does not deflect from my findings in respect of the effect it would have on the local street scene.
 10. There are a small number of other cases of two storey side extensions to properties of similar design within the estate, including those referred to by the Appellant at 22 Woodwell Road, nearby to the north, and 5 Hung Road located a significant distance to the west. However, the circumstances of those cases in terms of their location and design context are different to those of the proposal which I have in any case considered on its own merits. There are also other examples of terraced dwellings in St. Bernard's Road. However, these reflect

the varying original house types within the street and generally retain a high degree of symmetry.

11. For the above reasons, the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to policies BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy and DM21, DM26, DM27, DM29 and DM30 of the Bristol Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (the SADMP) which together, amongst other things, require new development to deliver high quality urban design, protect the character and appearance of the area and contribute towards local character and distinctiveness. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which in section 12 relates to achieving well-designed places.
12. The Council also refers to policy DM28 of the SADMP in the reason for refusal in its decision notice. However, that policy specifically relates to public realm and so is not directly relevant in this case.

Planning balance

13. The proposed development would have the benefit of adding a two-bedroom dwelling to the local supply, mix and choice of housing in an easily accessible location. It would also be likely to have some economic benefits including in terms of creating jobs and supporting building suppliers during its construction, and support of local facilities and services by prospective occupiers. However, those benefits would be small, relating only to a single dwelling and insufficient to outweigh the unacceptable harm the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR