



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020 by C Brennan BAE (Hons) M.PLAN MIPI

Decision by Andrew Owen BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/20/3262207

20 Birchwood Road, St Annes, Bristol BS4 4QH

- 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 Simon Hughes against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02410/H, dated 7 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2020.
 - The proposed development is new flat-topped mansard roof with dormer windows as a third storey set-back from existing parapet and single storey rear ground floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached dwellinghouse. The property forms part of a visually cohesive group of four semi-detached pairs, Nos 14-28, which are characterised by their flat roofs, parapet walls with distinctive front balustrade, window detailing and stone front façades. While Birchwood Road features a variety of building typologies, Nos 14-28 are particularly notable due to their high-quality design and architectural unity. For these reasons, this group contributes very positively to the character and appearance of the streetscene. The group is situated on an incline which slopes down to the busy junction of Birchwood Road, St Anne's Park Road, Guildford Road and Rochester Road around 100m to the north, and so is particularly prominent due to its elevated position.
 5. The proposed mansard roof extension would be set behind, but project above, the existing parapet wall and would slope away from the front façade. However, as flat roofs are an established feature of this group, the proposed mansard would appear as an incongruous and discordant element that would undermine its unified appearance. This element of the proposal would unbalance the symmetry between the appeal property and the adjoining semi-
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- detached property, and the raised chimney stacks would also further detract from the visual cohesion of the group to the detriment of the local townscape. Moreover, as it would be highly visible within public views from St Brelades Grove to the east and the busy junction to the north, the proposed roof extension would appear as a particularly prominent and unsympathetic addition. As such, due to its height, scale, form and design, the proposed roof extension would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.
6. The appellant refers to several examples of approved mansard roof extensions within their evidence. In the case of 213 Wick Road, the property appears to be a standalone property that does not form part of a group, and so the context of this development is not comparable to that of the appeal site. Similarly, from the photograph provided, 89 Greenway Bush Lane does not form part of a group with the same townscape value as Nos 14-28. Regarding 57 Coronation Road, the terrace to which this property belongs comprises properties of varying heights, design and proportions so does not have a comparably uniform appearance. In the officers' reports relating to 15, 23 and 35 Hebron Road, officers remarked that Hebron Road is a narrow road, that the mansard extensions would not be highly visible from public views, and that there was already precedence set along the street for mansard roof extensions. For these reasons these examples do not provide justification for the proposal which would appear prominent and incongruous in public views. In any case, each appeal must be considered on its own merits.
 7. In a letter sent to the Council dated 3 August 2020, the appellant states that the proposal would set a good precedent for roof extensions for other properties within Nos 14-28 and provides an image showing all eight properties with similar mansard extensions. However, as there is no guarantee that the occupants of the other properties would ever apply for roof extensions, this is a purely hypothetical consideration to which I give no weight.
 8. Within the statement of case, the appellant has drawn my attention to various Grade II listed buildings within the wider Bristol area which have mansard roof extensions behind a parapet wall. Though this demonstrates that mansards are not uncommon in the city, they are not characteristic of Nos 14-28 specifically and so the introduction of one would appear inharmonious.
 9. While I acknowledge the Local Character Assessment and accept that the appeal site lies adjacent to a busy highway, outside of a Conservation Area and away from any listed buildings or monuments, the proposal must nonetheless be of the highest standards in terms of design and must respond positively to the character of the appeal property and the streetscene. As set out above, I have found that this would not be the case.
 10. I note that support is given in the National Planning Policy Framework for upward development. Nonetheless, I have found that the proposal would not do so in a manner that would respond positively to the character or appearance of the site or the surrounding area.
 11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2014) which state that new

development should deliver high quality urban design, be expected to contribute towards local character and distinctiveness, be appropriate to the immediate context in terms of height and massing, and respect the scale, form and proportions of the host building and the broader street scene.

Other Matters

12. While I appreciate that the proposed roof extension would allow for greater living space for the appellant and their family, these personal circumstances do not outweigh the identified harm that would result from the proposal. Similarly, the benefits of the proposal in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability would not overcome the harm that would be caused in terms of character and appearance.
13. From the details of the appellant's correspondence with the Council, it is clear to me that the Council entered into clear and frank communication with the appellant from an early stage of the application process. As I come to a similar conclusion regarding the unacceptability of the proposed roof extension, I do not consider that the Council behaved unreasonably based on the evidence before me, nor do I think that they have been unfair in their application of the policies of the development plan.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

C Brennan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR