



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 February 2021

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/20/3263304

1 Little Headley Close, Bishopsworth, Bristol BS13 7PJ

- 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 James Bendall against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/03266/H, dated 18 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and single storey rear extensions.
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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 host property, the semi-detached pair and the wider area.

Reasons

3. Little Headley Close is a 20th century residential street which comprises pairs of two storey semi-detached houses along with the occasional detached house. For the most part, the development is formally laid out with identifiable set-backs and building lines that provide an important sense of spaciousness within the street.
4. The appeal property is a semi-detached house. It occupies a prominent corner plot position alongside the entrance to a cul-de-sac which heads northwards from the main part of the street. The two storey gable end and the front elevation of the house form part of building lines on the north side of the main street and the west side of the cul-de-sac respectively. The former has already been breached at the appeal site by a single storey side extension. However, due to the deep nature of the original set back, a distinct gap has been retained between the flank of the extension and the back of the public footway which preserves a degree of spaciousness within the street.
5. The proposal is for a two storey side extension, similar to the width of the existing side extension and a single storey rear extension that would span the full width of the house. The ground floor of the side extension would wrap around the front of the house and integrate with a front porch.
6. The Council's 2005 'A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions' Supplementary Planning Document Number 2 (SPD), specifies that side

extensions to semi-detached houses should be subservient to the existing house to maintain the properties' architectural integrity, the balance of the pair and the character of the street. It advises this can be best achieved by setting the extension back from the front wall of the house, and stepping down the roof ridge height. As a guide, it suggests a minimum set back of 1m should be provided. One of the diagrammatically illustrated 'good examples' of a side extension in the SPD shows the 1m set back only applied at the first floor level.

7. The proposed two storey side extension would adhere to the SPD's advice by having a lower ridge height and setting back the first floor by approximately 1m from the front wall of the house. Consequently, the Council raises no objection to the first floor of the side extension or the single storey rear extension and there is no reason for me to take a different view on those aspects.
8. The Council's concerns specifically relate to the ground floor front wrap-around element. In this regard, another part of the SPD acknowledges the acceptability of an 'integral design solution for a porch and garage' which would have a similar form at the ground floor level as the appeal proposal. Therefore, when considering the host dwelling in isolation, the development would be subservient to the existing house and maintain its architectural integrity.
9. However, there would only be a narrow gap remaining between the back of the public footway and the south east corner of the front projection. This would result in the appeal property appearing unduly cramped within its plot. It would also significantly undermine, at a prominent location, the important sense of spaciousness within the street.
10. Furthermore, the attached neighbouring property, No 3, already has a two storey side extension. While the front of that extension is set back at the first floor level, the ground floor aligns with the main front wall of the house. The wide mass of the proposed front projection at the host property, which would breach the common building line, would therefore detrimentally unbalance the two properties and fail to maintain their architectural integrity as a pair.
11. In light of the above, it is concluded the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property, the semi-detached pair and the wider area. It would conflict with Policy BCS21 of the Council's 2011 Core Strategy which seeks to ensure development contributes positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. It would also conflict with Policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the Council's 2014 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies which, amongst other things, expect development to respect the local pattern and grain of development, responding appropriately to the scale, massing and form of existing buildings, as well as building lines and set backs. Additionally, it would conflict with the SPD, particularly in relation to maintaining the balance of the pair of properties and the character of the street.
12. It is acknowledged there are examples of semi-detached houses in the street which have a ground floor wrap-around that integrates with a front porch. However, they do not impact on the spaciousness of the street to the same degree as the appeal proposal. Similarly, even if a 1.2m deep front porch were to be separately constructed utilising permitted development rights, as suggested by the appellant, it would not harm the spaciousness of the area or

unbalance the pair of properties to the same degree as the appeal scheme. Furthermore, as separate projecting front porches are widely found in the locality, it would not appear incongruous.

13. The appellant's desire to provide semi-private downstairs accommodation for an older family member is recognised. However, it does not justify the permanent harm to the character and appearance of the pair of properties and the street scene.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C J Ford

PLANNING DECISION OFFICER