



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2021

by Roger Clews BA MSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 31 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/20/3263954

3 Northfield Road, St George, Bristol BS5 8PA

- 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 Mrs Jennifer Fullergreen against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/04079/H, dated 6 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension to provide additional living space.
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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 of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 3 Northfield Road is one of a pair of semi-detached houses with bay windows at ground- and first-floor level. There are similar pairs of semi-detached houses to either side, and along both sides of the adjacent Westmead Road. Further along this side of Northfield Road the houses are built in a plainer style without bay windows, but they too are grouped into semi-detached pairs of comparable size. On the opposite side of Northfield Road are three groups of terraced houses similar in style to, but somewhat smaller than, the semi-detached houses which they face.
4. The far end of Northfield Road opens out into a green space, around which are grouped houses of a different style, built at right-angles to those in the rest of the road. Accordingly, that part of the road has a distinct and separate character from that of the area surrounding the appeal property.
5. The houses in Westmead Road and the main part of Northfield Road are set back from the road behind front gardens and forecourts, while the pairs of semi-detached houses and the terraces are separated by generous gaps from their neighbours to either side. While in many cases there are single-storey garages or extensions in the gaps, in all but one instance the original spacing at first-floor and roof level has been retained. This allows views through from the street, between each pair or group of houses, to the sky and the tops of

trees in the gardens behind. As a result, the area surrounding the appeal property has an attractively open character.

6. At its closest point the proposed extension at 3 Northfield Road would extend up to the property boundary with No 1. It is true that, because Nos 1 and 3 are built at an angle to one another, the remaining gap between their frontages would be greater than if they stood on the same building line. But for the same reason, the gap between the two houses at the rear would be narrower, and views between them correspondingly more restricted. The overall result would be a substantial reduction in the spacing between the two houses at first-floor and roof level. Because of this, the proposed extension would have a harmful impact on the attractive open character of the surrounding area.
7. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with policy BCS21 of the *Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy* and with policies DM26 and DM30 of the Council's *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan*. Those policies seek to ensure that new development contributes positively to an area's character and local distinctiveness, and that alterations to existing buildings respect the overall design and character of (among other things) the broader street scene.
8. The proposed extension would be set back from the main house frontage, and its roof ridge would be a little lower than that of the main house roof. In these respects, the proposal would follow guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document No 2 (*A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions*). But that document also makes clear that gaps between detached or semi-detached houses are an important characteristic, and that their infilling with side extensions can detract from the appearance of the neighbourhood. That would be the case here.
9. My attention was drawn to the existing two-storey side extension at 23 Northfield Road, which was permitted in 2015. That extension, which extends up to the boundary with No 21, has a similarly harmful effect on the open character of the area to that which would be caused by the appeal proposal. As a result, I do not regard it as a positive precedent which would justify the proposed extension at No 3.
10. There are also two-storey side extensions at 2 Northfield Road and 35 Westmead Road. But because those properties are at the end of their respective roads, with no adjacent houses to the side on which their extensions stand, the extensions have no materially adverse effect on the open character of the area.

Conclusion

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

Roger Clews

Inspector