



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2021

by M. P. Howell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Wednesday 5 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/21/3281693

1 Selsdon House, Smyths Close, Avonmouth, Bristol BS11 9FS

- 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 John Hawkins against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01176/F, dated 1 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of terrace with balustrade above existing flat roof
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of terrace with balustrade above existing flat roof at 1 Selsdon House, Smyths Close, Avonmouth, Bristol BS11 9FS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/01176/F, dated 1 March 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 748/400 Rev A, 748/401 Rev A, 748/403 Rev A, 748/404 Rev B, 748/405 Rev A, 748/406 Rev A, 748/407 Rev A, 748/410 Rev B, 748/411 Rev B, 748/412 Rev B.
 - 3) Prior to the installation of the hereby permitted metal railing balustrade, details, including a sample, of its material, colour, finish and fixing method shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. The original description of development specified a glass balustrade. However, during the application, the proposal was amended to replace the glass balustrade with a metal railing. As such, I have taken the description of development from the Council's Notice of Decision as it provides a more accurate description of the amended scheme than that outlined on the original planning application form. As the amended description is consistent with that outlined on the Appeal Form, I am satisfied that there would be no prejudice in this respect.
3. During the course of the appeal the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. There are no substantive changes relevant to the appeal before me and therefore no interested parties would be prejudiced by my consideration of the 2021 version of the Framework.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposal on the significance of Selsdon House as a non-designated heritage asset, and on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. Avonmouth Road is a mix of residential and retail uses. In the immediate context of the appeal site, the street scene is largely characterised by three storey buildings with retail uses at ground floor and residential above. Selsdon House itself was a police station but has recently been converted to nine flats, accommodated by a rear subordinate extension. It is recognised as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) for its local historical importance as a post office and its neo-Georgian architectural design. The neo-Georgian architectural features and materials are of significance and are largely appreciable from the front. By itself, or as part of a group with the adjacent Grade II Listed Old Bus Depot and row of shops opposite, Selsdon House makes a positive contribution to the street scene on the Road.
6. The proposal is for a terrace that would be located on the flat section of the subordinate rear roof extension. The proposed railings are an open metal design finished in black with a standard handrail height.
7. The depth of the proposed terrace is modest, and together with the siting, the open design, colour and height of the railing, the visual impact upon the significant features of the NDHA would be limited. Furthermore, the use of a traditional metal railing would also be considered an appropriate and sympathetic use of material. Although the balustrade would be visible from certain locations on the Road, these views would be moderated by the depth and open design of the railings. Furthermore, the slope of the main roof and the adjacent turret on the Old Bus Depot would mitigate the most prominent views of the proposal from the Road. Accordingly, the scale, siting and design of the proposal is acceptable, having a negligible impact upon Selsdon House, its significance as a NDHA and its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the street scene.
8. I appreciate that the balustrade would be visible from close proximity on Smyths Close, however, due to the height of the existing rear extension, the railings would not be a prominent feature from street level. In addition, views of the site from St. Brendan's Way would be at a distance and are read in context with the rear street scene. The rear street scene is characterised by a mix of modern and traditional buildings, some with glass balconies. As such, the proposed terrace and railings would not appear as an odd or discordant feature in this context.
9. I, therefore, conclude that the proposed terrace with metal railing balustrade would be appropriate and would not impact upon the significance of Selsdon House as a non-designated heritage asset, and the character and appearance of the area. As such, the scheme complies with Policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 as well as Policies DM30 and DM31 of the Bristol City Council Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014. These policies, in general, require new development to be high quality, respect the overall design and character of the host building and contribute positively to an area's local character as well as safeguarding locally important heritage assets. It would also accord with the objectives of Section 16 of the Framework.

Other Matters

10. I note that concerns were raised over the introduction of a canopy or pergola, which would add to the visual intrusion. Although I appreciate additional developments could add to the visual impact of the terrace, these works would require planning permission and are not proposed in this instance. As such, I attribute this matter limited weight in my decision.

Conditions

11. In addition to the statutory time limit, it is necessary in the interests of precision and clarity, to define the approved plans for the scheme. Furthermore, a condition ensuring the specific details of the traditional metal railing, its colour and finish would be appropriate to ensure the finish is of a high quality that safeguards the character and appearance of the NDHA.
12. The Council have requested a condition requiring a 1:10 scale drawing of the balustrade, but this is not necessary to make the scheme acceptable. The submitted plans adequately identify the location of the balustrade and the condition requiring details, including a sample, of its material, colour, finish and fixing method would be sufficient to safeguard the character of the area.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and taking into account the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M. P. Howell

INSPECTOR