



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2021

by Oliver Marigold BSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B1605/D/21/3282970

35 Naunton Crescent, Cheltenham, GL53 7BD

- 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 North against the decision of Cheltenham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00998/FUL, dated 27 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2021.
 - The development is proposed two storey rear extension, loft conversion and new dormer at rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cheltenham Central Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Cheltenham's Central Conservation Area (CA) is large and diverse, including the town centre and residential areas of different eras. As a part of the CA, the Leckhampton Character Area (LCA) includes large areas of compact 19th Century artisan terraced housing. The houses contribute to the LCA and the CA as a whole because of their distinctive character, including as a cohesive group.
4. The Leckhampton Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan (LCAMP) identifies the terraces at Naunton Crescent, including the appeal site, as being positive buildings that contribute to the area's character and appearance. It identifies important characteristics of historic terraces such as those here as being the unity and cohesion of their built form.
5. Number 35 Naunton Crescent retains much of its original form as an artisan terraced house. This includes its two-storey mono-pitch rear wing, and its simple roof. The overall form of the property contributes to the wider terrace and makes a positive contribution to the CA due to this form, integrity and as a part of the coherent whole of the terrace in which it sits.
6. The proposal seeks to construct a two-storey rear extension and dormer in an overall cohesive approach. The Council does not object to the ground floor rear extension element and given its subservience I see no reason to disagree. At first floor level, however, the proposed rear extension would encompass the

whole width of the property and so would physically and visually remove much of the existing rear wing.

7. The appellant considers that the street only has uniformity when viewed from the front elevation, and that any uniformity to the rear that may have existed previously has been eroded over time by subsequent development. They also note that the LCAMP does not make specific reference to the importance of the rear elevations of properties on Naunton Crescent, and that there are only limited public views of the rear of the property, from Naunton Terrace.
8. While there may have been a loss of uniformity at ground floor level, from the evidence before me and my own observations of the area, and while noting that the LCAMP does not make specific reference to the importance of rear elevations, many properties in Naunton Crescent have kept their mono-pitch rear projections at first floor level, even after redevelopment at ground floor, thus retaining a rhythm to the street that enables their historic form to be clearly read. I therefore consider that the loss of the rear wing as proposed would be harmful to the property's appearance.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of other properties in the terrace that have had their rear projections infilled or removed, in a manner described by the appellant as 'less considerate'. I have limited information on these properties and do not know the background of these extensions but in any case, they do not justify the harm identified. Furthermore, they represent a small proportion of the terrace as a whole.
10. The proposal also includes a rear dormer. The appellant argues that its position above the ridgeline would not be visible from Naunton Crescent, given the perspective required to see it. Even so, the height of the dormer and its width, covering much of the rear roofslope, would be uncharacteristic of the property's simple design and that of the street as a whole.
11. Concerns have been raised about the consistency of the Council's decisions and examples of other dormers nearby have been drawn to my attention. While the dormers referred to in Naunton Lane and Naunton Way may be viewable from within the CA, they are outside this designation and built on dwellings with a different design to those at Naunton Crescent, limiting the comparison that can usefully be drawn from them. I also viewed the dormer at 8 Leckhampton Road, within the CA. While this development is reasonably prominent in the CA, the dwelling has a very different appearance to the appeal proposal, and I find little similarity between the two. Furthermore, few if any of the other examples cited involve the extent of changes proposed here across the whole rear elevation and roof. I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.
12. Overall, I consider that both the first-floor extension and the dormer would result in significant harm to the property's integrity and to its character and appearance, and to that of the CA.
13. The statutory duty in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is a matter of considerable importance and weight. The proposal would have a negative effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset and would result in 'less than substantial' harm in the words of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). While I

recognise the benefits of the proposal to the appellant, no public benefits have been put forward to weigh against this harm.

14. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies SD4 and SD8 of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (December 2017), and policy D1 of the Cheltenham Plan (July 2020), which require that proposals conserve and enhance heritage assets and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. For the same reasons the proposal is contrary to the LCAMP (July 2008), the Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD (November 2008) and to the Framework.

Other Matters

15. I am aware of the appellant's stated willingness to amend the dormer element of the scheme. I note that plans have been submitted to demonstrate this. However, these plans were not formally submitted as part of the application, and as such have not been considered by the Council or other parties. Consequently, in the interests of fairness to all parties I have made my decision on the basis of the plans that were before the Council when it reached its decision.

Conclusion

16. Given the above, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cheltenham Central Conservation Area. It would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations to outweigh that finding. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Oliver Marigold

INSPECTOR