



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2022

by M Ollerenshaw BSc(Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/W/21/3282863

15 Monk Bridge Terrace, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4HW

- 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 Brian Prendergast against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03668/FU, dated 26 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a detached two bedroom, two storey dwellinghouse on site divided from No 15 as individual plot.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the area, and whether the proposed new dwelling would provide for satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to external amenity space, outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a triangular shaped parcel of land directly to the south of 15 Monk Bridge Terrace, a semi-detached bungalow, and was formerly used as part of the garden of that property, but has since been divided from it to create a separate plot. The site is located on the corner of Monk Bridge Terrace and Monk Bridge Mount and is opposite Meanwood Beck, an Urban Green Corridor. The site is bounded by an established frontage hedge and by high fences to the side adjacent to No 15 and to the rear boundary with 8 Monk Bridge Mount. The latter property is situated on higher ground than the site and includes a detached garage which abuts the site.
4. The surrounding area is of established residential character with variation in the size and design of dwellings. Properties are predominantly semi-detached bungalows and traditional terraced houses, such as those on the western side of Monk Bridge Terrace. The bungalows have a high degree of uniformity resulting from the relatively consistent building lines, their simple design featuring hipped roofs and a limited palette of external materials comprising red brick and concrete roof tiles. There are broadly even gaps between the bungalows, which front onto the road with a garden and driveway and more private gardens to the rear. Many properties have planting in the front gardens

which, together with the woodland within the green corridor, results in a spacious and verdant character.

5. The nearby terraced properties are generally located on smaller plots with limited external amenity space, and many front directly onto the footway. Nevertheless, the site itself is seen predominantly within the context of bungalows situated on generously sized plots. As an open plot on a prominent corner opposite Meanwood Beck, the site contributes positively to the visual amenity of the Urban Green Corridor.
6. The appeal proposal would be a detached, two storey dwelling set back from Monk Bridge Terrace with a front garden and driveway and a small patio to the rear. The proposed dwelling would have a stepped roof profile and an irregular floor layout which takes into account the shape of the site whilst also maintaining the building lines of the properties along this stretch of Monk Bridge Terrace and Monk Bridge Mount.
7. As a two storey dwelling, the scale of the proposal would be in marked contrast to the neighbouring bungalows with the eaves and ridge height being higher than No 15. The height difference between the proposal and 8 Monk Bridge Terrace would not be as apparent because that neighbouring property sits on higher ground. However, the overall scale of the proposal would not relate well to the adjacent neighbouring properties, which would result in an incongruous relationship between the proposal and its neighbours.
8. Moreover, the stepped roof pitches and varying eaves heights would result in an awkward and uncharacteristic form of development which would contrast with the simple hipped roofs of the existing bungalows. The proposal would also include a variety of window sizes and styles, including high level windows within the roof space, which would be incongruous. The use of cladding boards to parts of all four elevations would not reflect the existing palette of materials which would further exacerbate the visual effects of the proposal.
9. The harm arising from the scale of the proposed dwelling would be exacerbated by the positioning of the proposal so close to the side and rear boundaries of the site with limited external space surrounding it on these sides. The small rear patio would not reflect the more spacious gardens of neighbouring bungalows. This would result in a development which would appear cramped in relation to the size of the site. Furthermore, because of the lack of space around the proposed dwelling, the extent of hard surfacing and the need to maintain adequate visibility along the site frontage, it is unlikely that the development could incorporate adequate landscaping to reflect its surroundings.
10. Due to its positioning on the corner and proximity to the highway, the proposal would be a highly visible and incongruous addition to the street scene. It would undermine the pattern of development on this part of Monk Bridge Terrace and would erode its established character.
11. Given my findings above that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, it follows that the contribution that the appeal site currently makes to the visual amenity of the Urban Green Corridor would be diminished by the proposal.

12. I appreciate that design can be a subjective issue and the aim behind the proposed dwelling was not to create a pastiche of the existing bungalows on either side of the site. However, I have found that the scale and design of the proposed dwelling would fail to respond to local character and identity.
13. The appellant has referred to other recent developments in the immediate area which have been successfully integrated with their surroundings. However, I do not have the substantive details of these cases before me to enable me to draw any comparisons with the appeal proposal, which I have determined on its own merits.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. That would be in conflict with Policy P10 of the Leeds City Council Core Strategy (as amended by the Core Strategy Selective Review (2019) (CS), saved Policies GP5, LD1, N8 and N9 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review (2006) (UDP), and the Leeds City Council Neighbourhoods for Living Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). These policies and guidance seek to ensure that development proposals resolve detailed planning considerations, provide good design that is appropriate to, amongst other things, its location and reflect the character of the area, including urban green corridors. The development proposed would also be contrary to the Framework, where it seeks to achieve well-designed places. Although the Council's decision notice refers to Policy BD5 of the UDP, I do not consider it to be of relevance to this matter as it relates primarily to amenity.

Living Conditions

15. The external amenity space for the proposed dwelling would comprise a garden to the front and a patio to the rear with a driveway to the side capable of accommodating two vehicles. The Council claims that the proposed external amenity space is under-sized when assessed against the guidance contained in the SPG, which is contested by the appellant.
16. The rear patio area would be hemmed in by the dwelling itself and high fences to the side and rear boundaries and so would be very restricted in size and confined in nature. This space would not reflect the more generous gardens of neighbouring bungalows. The outlook from the patio would be very limited and it would likely be in shadow for much of the day.
17. Whilst the front garden would be larger, in order to maintain visibility to the vehicular accesses serving No 15 and the proposed dwelling, any boundary treatments to the site frontage would not exceed 600mm in height. Consequently, the garden to the front would be unlikely to provide occupants with sufficient levels of privacy. I therefore consider that the external amenity space proposed would not provide an adequate space to cater for the needs of future occupiers of the development.
18. Due to the proximity of the French doors to the rear site boundary, and the difference in levels between the site and 8 Monk Bridge Mount, the dining room would have a restricted outlook and the amount of daylight that it receives would also be limited. However, given that this room would open out into the living room and benefit from borrowed light from the window to the front elevation, this would not represent a sufficient reason to withhold permission.

19. For the above reasons, I consider that the proposal would not provide for a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupiers, having regard to the proposed external amenity space. Thus, it would be contrary to Policies GP5 and BD5 of the UDP and guidance contained in the SPG. Taken together, these require proposals to be of a high quality design that provide satisfactory levels of amenity. It would also conflict with paragraph 130 of the Framework, which requires development to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

20. The development would offer potential benefits in terms of providing a new dwelling in a sustainable location. It would also have economic benefits through employment opportunities created during the construction phase of the development, Council tax revenue and spending in the local area by future occupants. However, the weight attributable to these matters is limited given the modest scale of the development proposed and would be outweighed by my findings as to the harm which would be caused.

Conclusion

21. For the above reasons, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, the appeal is dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR