



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2022

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/21/3288372

70 Hercules Close, Little Stoke, Bristol BS34 6JG

- 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 Ms J Donnelly against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P21/04783/F, dated 30 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1 no. rear dormer and raising of roof height to facilitate loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and area.

Reasons

3. Hercules Close is a residential estate laid out in a series of terraces. The terrace dwellings generally face open, landscaped spaces with pedestrian access to the front of the property. The rear of the buildings usually includes an enclosed garden and a garage or parking space which adjoins the road. Consequently, parts of the rear of the dwellings, in particular the tile hung upper floors and sloping roofs, are reasonably open to view from the estate road and are often publicly visible above the rear gardens and garages. These upper sections of the dwellings provide a general uniformity to the appearance of the estate and make a positive contribution to the character of the area.
4. 70 Hercules Close is a terrace dwelling that faces an open, landscaped space. The rear elevation faces towards part of the road and the upper section is visible from the adjoining section of the cul-de-sac. In this end part of the cul-de-sac, the upper floors and roofs of this and the surrounding terraces are fairly typical of the character of the wider estate.
5. The proposal would raise the stepped roof of No 70 so that it aligned with No 71 and add a dormer to the rear roof slope. The dormer, because of its reasonably large box-like appearance which would extend close to the new ridge, its span which would extend across the majority of the roof and the windows that would not align or respect the fenestration below, would dominate the roof of the dwelling when viewed from the road. Its size and design would not sit comfortably with the design of the dwelling and the

dormer would appear as a disproportionately large and discordant addition. Its appearance and raised ridge would be at odds with the uniform slope of the adjoining roofs and the mainly stepped ridges in this terrace and thereby the poor design and incongruous impact of the roof addition would unduly harm the character of the built form at this end of the cul-de-sac.

6. For these reasons the scheme would not comply with the guidance in the South Gloucestershire Council Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (adopted March 2021) (the Design SPD) which provides design principles to follow to ensure any box dormer is limited in scale and resultant visual impact.
7. I have carefully considered the case made to support the appeal proposal. In particular, I saw at my site visit the dormers which have been added to the rear roofs of Nos 76, 77 and 79 Hercules Close. These are generally the exception within the cul-de-sac and their appearance would not be wholly unlike the appeal proposal. These existing dormers do have an impact on the character of this part of the estate and I have taken their presence into account in my assessment of the character and appearance of the area. It appears that the addition at No 77 was added some years ago, potentially as permitted development, and the addition at No 79 was agreed in May 2021, in the form of a Certificate application, to be permitted development. In these circumstances, the visual merits of these schemes were not before the Council for consideration, unlike the present proposal.
8. The other dormer addition, at No 76, was granted planning permission in December 2017. It would have been assessed against the same development plan policies as the present scheme. However, since that time the Design SPD has been adopted, the National Design Guide was published in October 2019 and the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) places increased policy emphasis on the need to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings. These are material considerations that seek to raise the standards of design. I am therefore not satisfied that this earlier decision at No 76 and the resulting development, together with the effect with the neighbouring dormers, should form such a precedent that they should be used to justify the present scheme especially when I have identified the proposed dormer would be visually harmful to the host building and area. Taken in the context of the estate as a whole, and the positive elements of its character and appearance, I attribute these other examples of dormers limited weight.
9. Furthermore, while I note the case made regarding permitted development rights, I have limited detailed information to clearly demonstrate what, if any, scheme could be achieved as a roof addition at the appeal premises under permitted development rights. Without such confirmation in the form of a Certificate or other clear and unambiguous documentation for this property, I attribute any fallback position limited weight.
10. It follows from the above analysis that I conclude that the proposal would unduly harm the character and appearance of the host building and area. Accordingly, my analysis of the scheme against the development plan is that it would conflict with Policies CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy 2006-2027 and Policies PSP1 and PSP38 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (Adopted November 2017) which

seek, amongst other things, that development will only be permitted where the highest standards of design and site planning are achieved.

Conclusion

11. The scheme would provide improved and more extensive living accommodation for the present and future occupants of the dwelling, including with the required internal floor to ceiling height as designed. However, the benefits of the scheme would be limited in extent and should afford only limited weight in favour of the proposal. The benefits would not outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the host building and area, and the related conflict with the identified planning policies, which I attribute substantial weight.
12. For the reasons given above, there are no material considerations that indicate the proposal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR