



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2022

by Lewis Condé BSc (Hons), MSc, MRTP

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Thursday 24 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/21/3287435

73 West Street, Oldland Common BS30 9QT

- 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 Aaron Whiston (FJW Properties Ltd) against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P21/05092/F, dated 22 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Two storey side extension, two storey and single storey rear extension, new garage and various internal reconfigurations'.
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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 and appearance of the existing property and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 73 West Street is a large, detached, dwelling situated in a predominantly residential street. West Street is a long, and relatively straight road that contains a variety of dwelling types and styles, that together result in no overall strong architectural character. However, a generally consistent feature is that dwellings are set back from the street and front boundaries comprise a mixture of low walls, hedging and open driveways. These features combine to give the street a somewhat open character. This open characteristic is especially true of the eastern side of West Street, where the appeal property is sited. This is in part because properties in this area are predominantly detached and in sizeable plots, whereas the development pattern in other areas of the street is generally of a much closer knit.
4. The appeal dwelling sits within a spacious plot, set back significantly from the highway with a large driveway to its front and side. It appears to have already been significantly extended in the past via a two-storey side extension. The appellant has highlighted that the street does not contain a property 'No. 71 West Street'. Additionally, due to the appeal site's plot size and spacing of dwellings in the street, it seems as though No. 71 may have previously been demolished with the appeal property incorporating its curtilage. From my observations on site this would appear to be a logical view.
5. The appeal proposal includes two-storey extensions at both the side and rear, which would also involve introducing a larger hipped roof, increasing the overall

height of the dwelling. The extensions would be of a significant scale in comparison to the existing dwelling.

6. The two-storey side extension includes an additional bay and gable at its front, to replicate the dwelling's existing bay windows. This would add an overall sense of symmetry and balance to the property's principal elevation. However, I do not agree with the appellant's suggestions that the proposals represent clear improvements, by filling the gap where no. 71 may have once stood and through providing more balance to the existing house. Instead, I find that the design and proportions of the proposals do not appropriately correspond to that of the already extended original dwelling.
7. The scale of the extension when viewed from the front, through its increase in width and alterations to the roof, would seemingly engulf the host property. Despite the scheme having a rather balanced appearance, the overall proportions are excessively wide and tall, and not reflective of the host dwelling. Alongside the scale, I feel that the strong design aesthetics of the development would result in an appearance that would overwhelm the current dwelling. Consequently, I consider the proposals would result in a visually dominant and unsympathetic form of development.
8. Whilst reasonably localised in its extent, the effect of the scheme would be to unacceptably diminish the character, appearance, and integrity of the host building with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. While I note and agree with the appellant that the proposal would broadly echo the appearance of the pair of dwellings to the north, the additional height and size of the proposal would appear out of place within its context.
9. I have had regard to the Supplementary Planning Document 'Householder Design Guide' (2021) (SPD). I recognise that the SPD outlines guiding principles and that site specific circumstances may justify alternative approaches. In this instance it is relevant that the street scene contains a wide variety of property styles and scales which, to some extent, would reduce the overall harm of the proposals. Likewise, given the dwelling's generous plot size, the development would not appear cramped or result in detrimental spacing between buildings. I also note that the appellant has sought to take design cues from the adjacent pair of semi-detached properties and has incorporated materials and detailing to reflect other properties in the wider street scene. However, these aspects do not overcome my fundamental concern that the scale and appearance of the alterations do not represent a suitable form of development.
10. Although I am less concerned with the extension to the rear due to its more limited visibility, the two-storey element would still require an increase in the overall roof height of the property. The rear extension, as a whole, is also not severable from the wider alterations to the dwelling.
11. Turning to the proposed triple garage, it would be located immediately to the right of the appeal site's entrance driveway, occupying a prominent position adjoining the front boundary. The proposed building would be substantial in scale, covering much of the width of the front garden and protruding significantly above the front boundary wall. I find that its overall scale and location would result in the garage being a solid and intrusive feature in the front garden that would detract from the street scene.

12. The appellant has indicated that the appearance of the garage would be softened through the planting of new vegetation to the front boundary. The use of vegetation to soften the impacts of the garage may be capable of reducing its overall harm. However, the long-term effectiveness of using vegetation to conceal the garage cannot be guaranteed, nor can its retention be appropriately secured. I therefore do not consider that a landscaping condition could suitably mitigate the impacts of the garage proposal.
13. My attention has been drawn to other properties nearby where garages or outbuildings have been erected in front of the building line. I was able to view each of the examples referred to on my site visit and it was apparent that they were not directly comparable to the case before me. This was in part due to the examples being considerably smaller in scale than the appeal garage. The garages/outbuildings also tended to incorporate a more significant setback from the public highway than the appeal proposal. Furthermore, I do not have full details for these wider examples, including the circumstances that led to their development. Consequently, I give very little weight to these other examples, and, in any event, I have determined the scheme before me on its own merits.
14. Overall, the proposals are deemed to be of an inappropriate scale and design which would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. Consequently, the development conflicts with Policy CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy 2006 – 2027 (adopted 2013), Policy PSP38 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Site and Places Plan (adopted 2017) and would also be at odds with the aims of the SPD. These collectively require a high standard of design which ensures that extensions do not harm the balance and proportion of the original building and street scene.

Other Matters

15. I note the appellant's frustration regarding the lack of opportunity to resolve the LPA's concerns with the garage element of the proposals. However, the appeal has been determined on its own merits.
16. Various amendments took place to the appeal scheme throughout its application period. I note that the appellant states that the appeal is made on the basis of the proportions of the scheme as refused but that should the appeal be allowed that original plans for the scheme should also form part of the appeal. I have determined the appeal in accordance with the plans that the LPA's decision was made against and given that I have found that such proposals would cause harm, I have not considered this matter further.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, and all other relevant considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR