
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2022

by L Page BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/22/3302870

43 Cooks Close, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire BS32 0BA

- 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 Mark Dennis against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P22/01825/HH, dated 21 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of single and two storey front extension to provide additional living accommodation and garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development was changed during the course of the original application, and this is something acknowledged by the appellant in their appeal forms. The banner heading has reflected this change and the appeal has been considered accordingly.
3. The South Gloucestershire Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021 was not cited within the Council's original reasons for refusal. However, it has been dealt with by the parties in their submissions, and so I have taken it into account under the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The site is located at 43 Cooks Close, which comprises a two storey dwelling within a cul-de-sac of other two storey dwellings. I acknowledge the appellant's contention that all of the dwellings have an irregular pattern of development without any uniformity in building line. Consequently, there is a lack of rhythm and symmetry in how the dwellings are sited.
6. However, it is my view that the vast majority of the dwellings have similar frontages and design direction, in that the main part of each dwelling is readily identifiable with finely detailed and highly subservient forward projections, which are of limited scale.

7. For example, 43 Cooks Close exhibits ground floor forward projections that are limited in scale and comprise the garage, water closet and living room bay window, along with roof detailing that cuts across much of the frontage. The dwellings at 42, 43, 45 and 48 Cooks Close share broadly similar proportions.
8. Altogether, whilst the dwellings in the locality are not identical and exhibit some subtle variation, they do follow a similar design direction where forward projections are limited in scale and highly subservient to the main part of the dwelling.
9. The proposal would result in a significant forward projection at both ground and first floor level. Due to its scale, it cannot be considered limited and would be much less subservient to the main part of the dwelling compared to forward projections at other dwellings in the locality.
10. Consequently, the proportions of 43 Cooks Close would change markedly and the proposal would present as an incongruous addition to the street scene. Furthermore, the prominence of the location and visibility of the frontage along most of the cul-de-sac¹ would exacerbate this incongruity.
11. I acknowledge the appellant's contention that the proposal does have some degree of subservience to the dwelling when taken in isolation, not least due to the relationship between the ridge line of the main part of the dwelling, the width across the frontage and plot ratios, among other things.
12. However, the degree of subservience would still be incongruous when assessed in the context of other dwellings in the locality and would still lack an appropriate degree of conformity with the street scene.
13. Reinforcing this assessment is the South Gloucestershire Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021. It makes clear that front extensions are largely unacceptable, particularly two storey and not at all where it would upset the character of the street scene.
14. There is no evidence that the design principles established in the guidance should be restricted to the limited number of illustrative scenarios presented. There are a wide range of contexts within which the principles can be properly applied. Whilst the guidance is not in itself policy, it does inform the application of policy within the development plan.
15. There is a side elevation and blank façade adjacent to the site. However, this does not change my assessment of how the frontage of the proposal interacts with the street scene in the context of other dwellings.
16. I acknowledge the Council's position that the front door of the dwelling would be subject to a degree of concealment. However, this concealment would only occur at limited points along the cul-de-sac.
17. Generally speaking, the frontage would be visible from multiple other points along the cul-de-sac to the extent that I am satisfied there would be sufficient casual surveillance to make the proposal acceptable.

¹ Informed by my site visit where it was visible from multiple locations and notwithstanding any viewpoints presented in evidence.

18. Overall, the proposal would not deliver a limited and highly subservient forward projection and would therefore harm the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy 2013 and Policies PSP1 and PSP38 of the Policies, Sites and Places Plan 2017.
19. Among other things, these policies require proposals to demonstrate an understanding of, and respond constructively to, the buildings and characteristics that make a particularly positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the area.

Other Matters

20. I acknowledge there is no objection from other interested parties or statutory consultees. However, a lack of objection in and of itself does not mean the proposal is justified in all other respects.
21. The appellant suggests that the siting of dwellings within the cul-de-sac restricts how the dwelling subject to this appeal can be extended. Whilst I appreciate this may be the case, it does not in and of itself justify an alternative form of extension.
22. I note the planning history of the site, however it is not clear that there is a fallback position that can be weighed in favour of the proposal.
23. Whilst the appellant entered into pre application discussions with the Council, any advice is given without prejudice and has not been determinative under the appeal.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Liam Page

INSPECTOR