



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2023

by J White BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/22/3306839

22 Courtenay Crescent, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1TQ

- 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 Marcus Viera against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00192/H, dated 15 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is a rear ground floor extension with part first-floor bedroom extension and new front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a rear ground floor extension with two-storey side extension and front porch at 22 Courtenay Crescent, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1TQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00192/H, dated 15 January 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, unless otherwise required by condition below: Site Location Plan, Block/Site Plan, 22CC-02 and 22CC-03.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The banner heading above contains the original description of the development as set out on the application form. The appellant has explained that the original description is inaccurate because it does not refer to the two-storey side extension but rather a part first-floor bedroom extension. The appellant has confirmed in his statement that the proposed development is a rear extension with two-storey side extension and a front porch. The plans submitted with the application show the development proposed, including the two-storey side extension, and within the Council's report it is clear that its decision was based upon this development, as per plan 22CC-02. For precision, I have amended the description of the development proposed in the decision above.
3. During my site visit I observed that construction works have been carried out including the construction of extensions to the side and rear of the dwelling, although partially complete. I cannot be certain that the development has been constructed in accordance with the plans. Accordingly, I have considered the

proposal presented upon the plans that are the subject of the appeal and not in regard to what I observed at my site visit.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within a residential area that features semi-detached dwellings of similar age. The dwellings are typically set back from the street behind modest front gardens and are predominantly two-storey, evenly spaced and follow fairly consistent building lines. Most have even proportions and simple roof forms, and there is consistency in the form and appearance of houses. Although there is a distinctly different architectural vernacular to the group of dwellings on the opposite side of the street, the consistency in form and appearance of houses contributes strongly to the character and appearance of the area.
6. The pair of semi-detached dwellings of 20 and 22 Courtenay Crescent (No 20 and No 22) appear to be replicas of each other with the main front elevations being aligned to face the street. A single storey lean-to has been added to the side of No 20 and a conservatory has been erected at the rear. 24 Courtenay Crescent (No 24), which lies to the south, is aligned at an angle to the appeal site, reflecting its position within a corner plot. The spaces between the semi-detached pairs of houses contributes positively to the sense of openness within the street.
7. The two-storey extension would be constructed with its front elevation set back from the main dwelling by 0.7 metres. Whilst the Council's Supplementary Planning Document Number 2 'A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions' (SPD2) specifies that side extensions should be set back by a minimum of 1 metre, the two-storey element would nonetheless be noticeably stepped back, and the extension would be visibly set below the existing building, ensuring that it would appear as physically and visually subservient. It would be of a scale, form and proportions that has due regard to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Moreover, the extension would retain a distinct gap between it and No 24 so as not to appear overly prominent or unusual as part of the visible street scene. Although the gap would be smaller, due to the relative orientation of No. 24, it would not cause a terracing effect to the houses, nor would it detract from the rhythm of development and the sense of openness within the street.
8. The single storey rear extension would project from the rear elevation by 4 metres. It would be sizeable as a result of its construction along the full length of the building. However, it would remain subordinate to the host dwelling, proportionate to the large plot size, and contained at the rear, despite its depth of projection exceeding the guidance within SPD2. It would be of a similar depth to the conservatory at the rear of No 20 and, in this context, it would be subservient and would not diminish the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
9. The proposal includes a porch to the front of the dwelling. The parties agree this element of the proposal is acceptable. The porch would be modest in scale

and appearance. It would respect the vernacular of the dwelling and respond to the context of porches erected at other dwellings within the locality. As a result, the porch would be subservient and would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.

10. As such, despite a considerable increase in the floorspace, the proposed development would have a scale and form that would respect the character of the host dwelling and the broader street scene. The extensions would appear physically and visually subservient. The proposal would not unduly dominate the appearance of the host dwelling or appear as over-development. The overall effect is a scheme that would be proportionate to the semi-detached dwelling and maintain a sense of balance and symmetry between the pair of dwellings.
11. While I am mindful of the guidance in the Council's SPD2 and I am cognisant that the proposed development would exceed the size guidance, I find that the proposal would be of a scale and form that would respect the host dwelling and its locality. In any event, SPD2 is for guidance purposes and as I have found above, the proposal would not lead to harm.
12. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would be of an appropriate scale, form, proportions, and overall design and would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. The proposed development would comply with the relevant provisions of Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy, Policies DM26, DM27 and DM30 of the Bristol Local Plan – Sites Allocations and Development Management Policies, which together seek to ensure high quality design and development proposals that positively contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

Other Matters

13. The Council is also concerned that the appeal development, if permitted, would set a precedent for similar extensions in the area. However, I have considered this appeal on its individual merits and any future development proposals for similar structures in the area would have to be considered in a similar way. Moreover, I have found the scheme would be acceptable and therefore see no reason why it would lead to unacceptable development elsewhere.

Conditions

14. Having regard to the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework, the standard time limit is necessary, as is, in the interests of certainty, a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Finally, to protect the character and appearance of the host property and the area, I have imposed a condition requiring that the scheme be faced in matching materials.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

J White

INSPECTOR