



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2023

by M. P. Howell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/22/3313132

61 Westcourt Drive, Oldland Common BS30 9SE

- 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 Ian Fry against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P/22/00081/F, dated 6 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of an attached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Westcourt Drive is a residential estate, which is largely made up of semi-detached dwellings with a simple form and pitched roofs. The dwellings, for the most part, front the road with a consistent building line, set behind front gardens and driveways, which are open with low-lying enclosures and hedgerows. In the vicinity, there are a number of examples of attached two storey side extensions and dwellings on corner plots. Despite these additions, spacing on the corners has largely been retained, and the moderate density and openness to the front results in a pleasant character and appearance to the area.
4. 61 Westcourt Drive is a semi-detached two storey property, which is positioned at the corner junction with Highleaze Road. The front and side of the property is enclosed by a low-lying wall and planting with an open garden area. The plot is generous to the side, but the shape of the junction and adjoining road reduces the plot space to the front and rear. The consistency of appearance in the dwelling as well as the appreciable space at the front and corner of the plot contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposal has looked to replicate the pattern of development on Westcourt Drive by extending to the side of the semi-detached dwelling. In this respect, the proposed dwelling would have a similar orientation, depth, height and appearance to subservient two storey side extensions in the vicinity. However, a dwelling would be formed, and the smaller plot size would be conspicuous by virtue of the narrower width of the dwelling, its proximity to Henleaze Road and the tapered shape of the garden space to the front and rear. In this context, the size and siting of the proposed dwelling would significantly diminish the

appreciable space to the side. As such, the proposal would appear cramped and contrived, adversely impacting on the openness at the corner, which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

6. Therefore, I find that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the criteria set out in Policy CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013 (Core Strategy); and Policies PSP1 and PSP8 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan 2017. These policies, amongst other things, require proposals to be high quality designs. Developments should have appropriate siting, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour and materials which are informed by a response to the buildings and characteristics that make a particularly positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the area.
7. The proposed development would also be contrary to the general design policies set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

8. The appellant has provided examples of dwellings and extensions constructed and approved at corner locations within the area. Although the full details of all these cases were not provided, during my site visit, I observed the extension opposite, the land at 20 Court Road and dwellings constructed at the corners of Westcourt Drive/Westland Avenue and Westlands Avenue/Highlease Road.
9. From what I saw, the corner plots that have been developed to form a new dwelling are more generous in size with a less awkward shape. As such, the proposed dwellings can be wider and retain more appreciable space to the side. Furthermore, the extensions are generally narrower and do not require the subdivision of the plot. In this regard, the examples provided do not appear as cramped and contrived as the proposal now before me.
10. I acknowledge that a smaller dwelling in an accessible location would be an efficient use land and contribute to the variety in the type of houses in the area. It would also increase the local housing stock. I also note that the scheme would not be harmful to neighbouring living conditions and has sufficient parking and amenity provision. However, the uplift to the variety and supply of housing is small. The social and economic benefits from future occupiers would be minimal, and construction benefits would be short term. The scheme being acceptable in respect of other considerations is a neutral effect. As such, the benefits of the scheme would be limited and do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and taking into account the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M. P. Howell

INSPECTOR