



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2024

by Lewis Condé Msc, Bsc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/23/3326618

668 Southmead Road, Filton, South Gloucestershire BS34 7RD

- 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 Nick Howell against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P23/01432/F, dated 24 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is 'proposed side extension to form a 3 bedroom self contained house with associated access'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a side extension to form a 3 bedroom self contained house with associated access at 668 Southmead Road, Filton, South Gloucestershire BS34 7RD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P23/01432/F, dated 24 April 2023, 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:
 - Location Plan – Drawing No. 3149/504 (dated April 2023)
 - Proposed Site Plan - Drawing No. 3149/503 (dated April 2023)
 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations - Drawing No. 3149/502 (dated April 2023)
 - 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 of 668 Southmead Road.
 - 4) The off-street parking facilities (for all vehicles including cycles spaces) shown on the plan hereby approved (Drawing no. 3149/503) shall be provided before the building is first occupied, and thereafter retained for that purpose.

Applications for costs

2. An application for the award of costs against South Gloucestershire Council has been made by the appellant. This is subject to a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description of development is taken directly from the original planning application form.
4. In addition to the applicant's name, the original application form also included a company name under the applicant's details. However, I understand this incorrectly referred to a company that was previously acting as agents on behalf of the appellant. Hence the banner heading above only refers to the appellant's name, which remains as per the original application.
5. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 19 December 2023. Both main parties were offered the opportunity to comment on the implication of the changes to national policy on the appeal proposal. Where received, comments have been taken into account.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

7. No. 668 is one half of a pair of two-storey, semi-detached properties. It lies opposite open space, and sits amongst a small row of semi-detached dwellings that share a similar design, including featuring two storey flat roof bays to the front. However, no. 668 has previously converted its roof from a hip to gable end, whilst adjoining no. 670 has a two-storey hipped roof side extension. As such, despite similar design features there is a lack of symmetry between the pair of semi-detached dwellings.
8. Southmead Road is a long, main thorough fare that contains a mix of uses, but the stretch that the appeal site sits within has a primarily residential character. Although located within a small row of semi-detached properties of similar design, the wider streetscene contains a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings that vary in their design and appearance. This includes several that incorporate two-storey side extensions.
9. Notably, some properties nearby along Southmead Road, appear to have undertaken two-storey side extensions in order to create separate, but attached, residential units. Where this has taken place, the developments have typically incorporated separate front entrances facing onto the street. This has resulted in some dwellings displaying rather narrow frontages that appear at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
10. Whilst the proposed development would be for a new dwelling it would very closely replicate the scale and design of the recently approved two-storey side extension at the property (ref: P22/07055/HH). The proposal would have a consistent building line with nos. 668 and 670, whilst also incorporating matching materials and a two-storey flat roof bay across its frontage, thereby offering a sense of symmetry. Additionally, the proposal's incorporation of a hipped roof would result in a greater sense of cohesion between the adjoining neighbouring properties.
11. I appreciate that as the proposed development is for separate accommodation, the dwelling would be of a narrower form than majority of the residential

- properties along the street. However, due to the appeal scheme's rather discrete side entrance, when viewed from the streetscene, it would for all intents and purposes appear as a two-storey side extension. It would therefore appear visually similar to other extended properties in the street.
12. Additionally, the front garden to no. 668 is already given over entirely to driveway. As such, although parking spaces on the drive would be allocated for both the existing and proposed dwelling, it would not necessarily entail a change in appearance.
 13. The proposed development would also involve the sub-division of the rear garden in a somewhat crude manner. However, views of the garden arrangements would be extremely limited and unlikely to be appreciable from public vantage points.
 14. Consequently, whilst the proposed new dwelling, through its scale and position, would not precisely follow the prevailing pattern of development within the area, given its appearance, I do not consider that it would be particularly notable within the streetscene or that it would appreciably upset the rhythm of development.
 15. Concerns have also been expressed through the officer's delegated report that the proposed 'family room' at ground floor level does not contain any windows. Despite these concerns, the proposal was not refused on the grounds of inadequate living conditions for potential future residents. Instead, it was suggested that the lack of windows to this room demonstrates that the proposal is of an inappropriate design.
 16. However, the 'family room' would form part of an open plan kitchen/dining room that would be served by bi-fold doors across the rear elevation of the property. The room would therefore experience an outlook and natural light from the rear garden. Additionally, a separate lounge would be provided at the front of the property with an outlook onto Southmead Road. This layout of rooms is similar to the arrangements at the existing property (no. 668) and not one that I find to be unusual.
 17. Overall, I find that the proposal would not look out of place, nor cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It therefore conforms to Policies CS1 and CS17 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 2013) and Policy PSP1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (adopted 2017). Together these policies seek to ensure that new development is of a high-quality design which responds to and reflects the surrounding context.
 18. Likewise, the proposal adheres to the aims of the Framework in respect of promoting development that is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
 19. In coming to the above view, I am mindful of the previous appeals at the site that were dismissed¹ and note that Inspector's comments in relation to the prevailing character of the area. However, the proposal before me is of an amended design and one which I find would integrate effectively with its surroundings.

¹ APP/P0119/W/22/3294010 & APP/P0119/W/22/3294641 both dismissed 30 August 2022.

Conditions

20. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council against the requirements of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Framework. In the interests of precision and enforceability, I have undertaken some minor editing and have attached an additional condition that I consider necessary.
21. As well as the standard time limit condition, I have added a condition specifying the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
22. A condition requiring that the external materials to be used in the development match those of the existing dwellinghouse is reasonable and necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the proposed development.
23. A pre-occupation condition requiring the provision of the vehicle and cycle parking spaces shown on the approved site plan is also reasonable and necessary, in the interests of highway safety and to promote sustainable travel.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal is allowed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR