



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2024

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05.03.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/23/3335776

9 Church Lane, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4TX

- 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 Miss Alex Lievesley against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00298/H, dated 22 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is removal of existing roof and installation of loft extension to create accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. Church Lane runs down a relatively steep hill above the docks and is within part of the CA defined as Character Area 7- Clifton Wood Slopes, in the Clifton & Hotwells Character Appraisal & Management Proposals (2010) (CHCAMP). Most houses close to the appeal site share the predominant characteristics listed for the character area, which includes mainly 2 storey houses with a vertical emphasis, roofs concealed behind parapet walls which step down the hill, timber sashed windows and wood panelled doors.
4. The appeal site and adjoining neighbour, No 7, stand out because they are 3 storey and front on to the pavement forward of neighbouring houses which are set back behind low boundary walls and shallow front gardens. Consequently, part of their side walls are visible from the street. When approaching the site from further up the hill, the roof line is particularly pronounced because its side profile is partly visible, and because the front parapet walls on Nos 9 and 7 are the same height, rather than stepped. The side wall where the roof of the appeal property joins No 7 is slightly set back from the front wall and appears to be dual pitched from the street where it is silhouetted against the sky behind it. On the other side the parapet wall is similarly set back and angled but flattens off either side of a wide chimney stack. Part of the appeal property roof can be seen between the side parapet walls from these elevated views, which

sets it apart from most other houses on this section of Church Lane where the roofs are completely hidden from view.

5. The rear of houses on the appeal site side of the road are visible from Argyll Place Park, behind the appeal site. The rear roofscape varies with houses uphill of the appeal property comprising butterfly roofs and downhill comprising pitched roofs. Although the appeal property and No 7 each have 2 parallel pitched roofs with a valley in between them, they are partly hidden by the parapet walls, so that it appears as if they have single pitched roofs of a similar height and design. Their roofs are covered with clay double roman tiles, which are also noted in the CHCAMP as predominant features in the Clifton Wood Slopes Character Area. Although the appeal property is wider than its adjoining neighbour, in addition to their common roof design, building line and height, they share other features that identify them as a pair, including similar bath stone door surrounds on their front elevations, and distinct window arches above nine paned sash windows on their rear elevations.
6. The proposed mansard roof would be more prominent and visually intrusive than the existing roof when seen from the rear because of its additional height and more vertical roof plane and would appear out of keeping with the neighbouring roof on No 7. The distinct roof profile, when approaching the site downhill along Church Lane, would be altered with the prominent dual pitched dividing wall with No 7 hidden behind the proposed roof extension. It would also be visible from the first floor windows of houses on the opposite side of Church Lane, and from cars and pedestrians exiting Old School Lane onto Church Lane, from which views the difference in roof height and design between Nos 7 and 9 would be apparent and would upset the balanced appearance the houses currently share. The proposed development would thus harm the character and appearance of the host property and the appearance of the surrounding area.
7. Given the small scale of the development within the context of the Conservation Area as a whole, it would not harm its character. There would however be harm in terms of its appearance. The harm would be localised, limited and less than substantial but would nevertheless be contrary to Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Local Plan Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM26, DM27, and DM30 of the Bristol Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014) which require development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity and retain distinctive architectural features.
8. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires justification and, in accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework, I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal. There would be modest benefits arising from short term employment during its construction. However, such benefits would not outweigh the harm to the appearance of the building and Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area.

Other matters

9. The appellant has suggested that there would be environmental improvements as the new roof would prevent water ingress and thus preserve the fabric of the building. Nonetheless, such benefits could be achieved by repairing the roof rather than extending it as proposed.
10. I have had regard to examples of other roof extensions approved by the Council or allowed at appeal. The extension at 42 Clifton Wood Cottage replaced a

substantial existing roof structure which was similar to roof extensions on adjoining houses either side of it. The Inspector concluded that the proposed roof at 5 Cliftonwood Terrace would be hard to see from most public vantage points and the rear roof would remain unaltered, which is not the case with the appeal proposal. Belle Vue Crescent is not on a steep hill, so roof structures are not visible from the street and the rear of the property does not appear to be visible from the public realm, as is the case with the appeal proposal. At Oak Cottage the roof that was replaced appeared to be a poorly designed timber clad structure rather than an original feature. The examples provided are not therefore directly comparable to the appeal proposal. In any case, I have come to my own view regarding the development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR