



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/23/3335088

19 Branksome Drive, Filton, South Gloucestershire BS34 7EG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mark Cowley of Likemind Developments Ltd against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref is P23/00453/F.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side extension to form 2 no flats with associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the Council's description of development as this more accurately and concisely describes the proposed works.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area; and
 - whether a satisfactory standard of accommodation would be provided for future occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises an area of garden land, associated with 19 Branksome Drive.
5. No 19 forms part of a terrace on one side of Branksome Crescent. A matching terrace is positioned on the opposite side. Taken together, these form a uniform and purposefully planned layout within the wider housing development. The terraced rows are uniform in their scale and design, set within good sized garden plots and with hipped roofs over.
6. The proposed development would comprise the separation of the appeal site from No 19 and the creation of a new two-storey building to provide 2 flatbed dwellings. The proposed building would be positioned in line with the established terrace and of a similar overall design. The eaves height and ridge level would match that of No 19.

7. Due to its prominent position, the proposed development would be highly visible from the surrounding public realm. The site would also be visible from multiple private vantage points.
8. The existing properties either side of Branksome Close read as a cohesive group. Although they vary slightly in their detailed design as a result of alterations over the years, there are many consistent features, generally including the position of dwellings within individual plots. Whilst the design of the proposed building would be broadly in keeping with those existing properties and the wider area, its siting would not reflect the prevailing layout of the wider estate, visually unbalancing the terrace and the terrace which mirrors it. This is irrespective of No 1 Branksome Crescent occupying a smaller garden plot. As a result, the proposed development would be incongruous and harmful to character and appearance.
9. My attention is drawn to numerous extensions in the surrounding area, including at 1 Wades Road. However, this example forms a subservient extension to an existing property, not the extension of an established terraced row to create new units. Moreover, that scheme does not have the same relationship with the adjoining properties and the street in terms of uniformity of layout. Consequently, that scheme is not directly comparable with the appeal scheme before me and has not led me to an alternative conclusion on this main issue.
10. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area, conflicting with the relevant provisions of Policies CS1 and CS17 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy 2006-2027 (CS, adopted 2013) and Policy PSP1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (LP, adopted 2017). These policies, when taken as a whole, seek to ensure development is well designed and reflects the character of the location. Similarly, the proposed development would conflict with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as good design is concerned.

Standard of accommodation

11. LP Policy PSP8 sets out that development proposals will be acceptable provided they do not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of occupiers. LP Policy PSP43 sets out that all new residential units should have access to provide amenity space. These, amongst other things, should be functional and safe, easily accessible from living areas, orientated to maximise sunlight and be of a sufficient size to meet the needs for likely occupiers. For a one-bedroom dwelling a minimum of 5sqm is required.
12. In respect of private amenity space, both properties would have access to their own dedicated garden space which would meet the minimum size requirements set out in policy. In my view, both proposed areas would be satisfactory for future occupiers.
13. In respect of outlook, both units would be dual aspect. Whilst the living area of the ground floor dwelling would look out to the rear, towards the proposed car parking area, this would not result in any unacceptable harm to the living conditions of future occupiers.

14. Overall, I conclude that the standard of accommodation for future occupiers would be acceptable, compliant with the relevant provisions of LP Policies PSP8 and PSP43 which, in summary, seek to ensure a good standard of accommodation. This is in a similar vein to the objectives of the Framework insofar as living conditions are concerned.

Other Matters

15. In coming to my conclusions, I have had regard to the extant scheme at the site¹. I have been provided with drawings to allow me to understand the difference between the permitted scheme and the appeal scheme. The permitted scheme includes a two-storey side extension. However, the scale of that extension would be significantly less than that of the appeal scheme and would be setback and set down from No 19. Moreover, the permitted scheme would be set well in from the boundary of the site. From that perspective, the permitted scheme would not harmfully unbalance the existing terrace.
16. The permitted scheme would be considerably less harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, and so does not justify allowing the appeal. In this respect, I attach little weight to the permitted scheme as a fallback position.
17. I accept that the proposed development would meet some other planning policy objectives, including in respect of internal space standards, parking and cycle and bin storage. However, those matters are not in dispute between the Council and appellant and I have no reason to disagree with those findings. These matters do not, therefore, weigh in favour of allowing the appeal.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR

¹ Reference P22/00187/F