



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2024 by N Manley BA (Hons)

Decision by S Edwards BA MA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/D/23/3334213

80 Stonecote Ridge, Bussage, Gloucestershire, Stroud GL6 8JY

- 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 Julian Lashmore-Davies against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref is S.23/1325/HHOLD.
 - The development proposed is erection of front porch, 3 no rear dormer windows, and garage conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description of the proposed works detailed on the application form has been amended in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description used in the Council's decision notice, which reflects accurately and concisely the proposal before me.
4. A new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2023. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
5. The site lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is designated for the purposes of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. On 22 November 2023, all designated AONBs in England and Wales became 'National Landscapes' (NLs). In my recommendation, I shall therefore refer to the Cotswolds AONB as the Cotswolds NL.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property, the surrounding area and the Cotswold NL.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. 80 Stonecote Ridge (no 80) is a two-storey detached dwelling located in a quiet residential cul-de-sac which is centred around a pleasant green space with several established trees. The area is largely characterised by detached dwellings, broadly similar to no 80, each occupying a comfortable plot. While sharing a common size, these residences boast slight design variations yet maintain uniformity through the use of a consistent exterior material. Situated to the east, and behind the host property, is the site of Thomas Keble School within which I observed a substantial new educational building being constructed.
8. The proposal includes the construction of a front porch which would be finished in cladding materials. The conversion of the garage would provide additional living space, utilising materials that match the main dwelling and nearby residences. Furthermore, the development would see additional living space provided within the roof space, incorporating three rear dormer windows.
9. At the time of my site visit, the garage conversion appeared to have already been completed. However, the Council's concerns pertained to the proposed construction of the front porch and the three rear dormers. Therefore, I shall limit my further assessment to these aspects of the proposal.
10. While the proposed size and scale of the front porch would appear subordinate to the main property, the use of cladding would detract from the host dwelling and its immediate surroundings. Although the appellant contends that this material can be seen on nearby houses, I observed the houses within the immediate visible vicinity of the host dwelling were predominantly finished in a mix of render and stone materials. When viewed in this context, the use of cladding would be out of keeping and this contrast would result in harm to the existing character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.
11. Due to their height, width and overall size, the three dormers would occupy a significant portion of the existing rear roof. This element, combined with the pitch and height of the existing roof, would leave minimal space between the dormers and the existing ridge height, resulting in a top-heavy and bulky appearance, with the dormers unduly standing out as the dominant feature. Furthermore, the proposed fenestration of the middle dormer would disrupt the largely symmetrical nature of the existing windows which is a design feature of the no 80s front and rear façades. Consequently, the appeal scheme would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to an example of a dormer development nearby, suggesting that dormers are a common feature within the area. Regarding this highlighted example, I do not have the specific circumstances or the policies and guidance that were applicable at the time of their consideration. Furthermore, during my observations, other nearby dwellings which had extended into the loft space tended to have done so with the insertion of rooflights, thus preserving the existing rear roof slope and maintaining the uniformity of character and appearance of the area. As a result, the dwellings near no 80 still maintained their original rear roof profile. In light of this, the introduction of three dormers to the rear roof of the host property would result in an incongruous addition, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the wider area.

13. With regards to the Cotswolds NL, the development would be situated within the built-up area and would be perceived as part of the existing settlement of Bussage, and largely surrounded by residential dwellings and educational facilities. As a result, despite the harm identified in relation to the host property and surrounding area, the development would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cotswolds NL.
14. However, for the aforementioned reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. Consequently, the appeal scheme would conflict with Policy HC8, criterion 2 of the Stroud District Local Plan (adopted November 2015) (SDLP), which requires the height, scale, form and design of the development to be in keeping with the scale and character of the original dwelling and the site's wider setting and location. Additionally, the development would not accord with Policy CP14, criterion 5 of the SDL which, among other things, requires development to be appropriate in design and appearance and respectful of the surroundings and the built environment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR