

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2024

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/23/3328519

4 Westfield Close, Hanham, South Gloucestershire BS15 3SB

- 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 Martyn Bolt against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref is P23/01316/F.
 - The development proposed is erection of 1 no. attached dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal lies within an area that has developed over time and is not homogenous. That said, Westfield Close has a distinct character comprising a cul-de-sac formed of two storey dwellings arranged in short terraces and pairs of semi-detached dwellings. The irregular building line, deep open frontages and notable gaps between buildings results in a pleasant spacious residential environment.
4. This is particularly evident at the junction of Westfield Close and Greenbank Road and at the head of the cul-de-sac whereby the deliberate positioning of the built form away from the roadside and the oversized side garden areas free from development positively contribute to the sense of spaciousness.
5. The appeal site comprises one such corner property comprising a modestly extended semi-detached dwelling sitting within a generous plot.
6. The proposed development would result in an uncharacteristic concentration of built form to the side of the host property that would unacceptably diminish the gap that exists between dwellings undermining the sense of spaciousness that exists at this road junction.
7. The proposal would extend the built form, at two storey height, closer to the side boundary and due to this relationship and its position considerably

further forward of 6 Westfield Close would result in an abrupt and discordant presence in the street, despite the variations in the distance that dwellings are set back from the road.

8. Whilst the host property has an existing single storey side element this does not have the same visual or physical impact as the taller and bulkier proposal.
9. The stepped profile of the roof and the compressed proportions of the dwelling would be very apparent resulting in an uncharacteristic and awkward physical and spatial relationship with the host property and No.6 appearing as an incongruous feature within the area.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to the Householder Design Guide adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Whilst it could be said that the proposed dwelling would have a similar orientation, height and appearance to a subservient two storey side extension the scheme before me relates to an independent dwelling, and I have assessed the appeal on this basis. Accordingly, I give the SPG and this aspect of the appellant's argument very limited weight in coming to my decision.
11. As such, the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy (2013) and Part 1 of Policy PSP38 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (2017) which, amongst other things, require development proposals to achieve the highest possible standards of design that respects and enhances the character of the site and its context; to integrate with existing adjacent development and to respect the building line, form, scale, proportions and architectural styling of existing dwellings.

Other Matters

12. Whilst I note the appellant's comments, informal discussions and advice given before an application is determined is given without prejudice and cannot pre-determine the final outcome of an application. In any event I have assessed the appeal on its own merits.
13. I acknowledge that the proposal would not unduly affect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or highway safety and would provide adequate amenity space for future occupiers. However, these are largely matters of neutral consequence in the overall balance.

Planning Balance

14. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
15. The appellant contends that the Council are underperforming in delivering new housing and cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land. However, I have not been provided with any evidence to support or refute this claim.

16. The provision of a family sized dwelling would make a small contribution towards the areas housing supply. The development would provide jobs, but this would largely be limited to the construction phase. The site is located within a short distance of a range of day-to-day services. Future occupants would be able to reach these on foot and by public transport, providing them with transport choice and not an over-reliance on a car. The proposal would help maintain services and facilities in the local area. These are social and economic factors weighing in the scheme's favour.
17. On the other hand, I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The Framework makes it clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It also expects development to add to the quality of the area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and layout. Even taking into account the objective to promote the effective use of land, including small sites, and to significantly boost the supply of housing the conflict between the proposal and the most important policies in the development plan should be given very significant weight in this appeal. Therefore, the adverse effects of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits.
18. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply and I have no reason to take a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons set out above the appeal does not succeed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR