



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 January 2019

by **S J Papworth DipArch(Glos) RIBA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 February 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/D/18/3217332

10 Westbury Gardens, Higher Odcombe, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8UR

- 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 Liam Delany against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02667/FUL, dated 18 July 2018, was refused by the Council by notice dated 8 November 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side and single storey rear extension to dwellinghouse (part retrospective).
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the street-scene. Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan states that development is to be designed to achieve a high quality which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district. In particular, extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be considered against criteria which include the creation of quality places and the reinforcement of local distinctiveness and which respect local context.
3. The Council have published '*Extensions and Alterations to Houses - a Design Guide*' which makes reference to constraints such as the character of both the area and the house. A 2-storey side extension is shown as an example which is subservient in ridge line and building line. Elsewhere it is stated that side extensions may be detrimental to the quality of the neighbourhood by infilling characteristic gaps between houses.
4. Paragraph 124 of the 2018 National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
5. Planning permission was granted in December 2017 for a single-storey side and rear extension. Whilst the approved rear extension has a flat roof, that to the side of the property was to have a lean-to style pitched roof. In the event a start has been made on a 2-storey side extension and the appeal drawings show a lower ridge line and a set-back from the front face of the house, as sought in the Design Guide.

6. There are 2 strands to the Council's objections and the first is to the use of render to the south elevation. Render was approved on the single storey extension but this would have been a more limited and low-level area. There are other, albeit limited, examples of render at low level on a garage nearby and on other buildings referred to by the appellant. However, the dwellings in this part of Westbury Gardens are constructed with reconstituted stone facings to flank gable ends. This material gives a slightly varied texture as well as varied coursing where it is not possible to trace a single continuous bed joint, with use made of deep and shallow blocks in combination. Notwithstanding that natural stone is not used, this gives a good representation of a traditional vernacular walling method.
7. Whilst it is the case that the photograph on the title page of the Design Guide shows a 2-storey extension with a rendered flank gable end, the impression is of a 'one-off', somewhat isolated, building, whereas the appeal building is one of a group of similar buildings that utilise materials in a similar way. Context is an important element when considering the effect on the street-scene.
8. In this situation, the use of a taller flank wall in render would appear out of character with the other 2-storey buildings, and being adjacent to a bungalow would appear prominent, stark and intrusive, lacking the variation and interest of the coursing evident elsewhere. The proposed more extensive use of render would cause harm to the present attractive uniformity of design in the area.
9. The second strand of objection was to the height of the 2-storey gable, with particular regard to the proximity of the boundary and the bungalow to the south. There do not appear to be characteristic gaps between houses as referred to in the Design Guide, the 3 houses on this side of the road having varied gaps between. The gap to the bungalow would have been wider and more open, but the approved single storey extension would reduce that in any event. There would be a change from 2-storey to the single storey of the bungalow at a point nearer the boundary, but that change occurs already and the nearer placement would not cause harm to the street-scene.
10. The lean-to arrangement of the approved single-storey side extension would provide a transition but would be high where it meets the house and uncharacteristically high over the window and consequently at the eaves, compared with that to a garage two plots to the north. As an alternative to the approved side extension, the 2-storey stepped-down continuation of the existing house would be acceptable, but without the use of render, and would accord with Policy EQ2 and the aims of the Design Guide, as well as guidance on design in the Framework.
11. However as previously set out, the use of render is unacceptable and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the street-scene, contrary to the Development Plan policy and guidance referred to. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Papworth

INSPECTOR