
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2016

by Matthew Birkinshaw BA(Hons) Msc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 20th September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/D/16/3155238
58 Branksome Drive, Shipley, BD18 4BE

- 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 Howard England against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02380/HOU, dated 29 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension and internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the streetscene within Branksome Drive; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants of 56 and 58A Branksome Drive, having particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Streetscene within Branksome Drive

3. Branksome Drive contains a mix of predominantly detached and semi-detached bungalows set back from the street. Although some have been altered and extended at first floor level the majority share a similar scale, form and hipped roof profile. Their broadly consistent appearance is a defining characteristic of Branksome Drive.
 4. As part of the appeal proposal the ridge height of the existing bungalow would be significantly increased to create two gable ends with front and rear facing dormers. In doing so, I consider that the size and scale of the extension would visually dominate the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. When viewed alongside the prevailing pattern of bungalows with mainly hipped roofs the size, scale and design of the proposal also sit uncomfortably with its neighbours and result in an incongruous form of development. In this location the contrasting appearance of such a large pitched roof with front-facing dormers would fail to adequately reflect its surroundings and would be harmfully out of place.
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5. In reaching this view I have taken into account that the streetscene is not entirely uniform. To the north of the appeal property no.58A has a large pitched roof with gable ends and during my site visit I saw other bungalows with roof extensions, including dormer windows. Nevertheless, these variations are relatively isolated features. Furthermore, no.58A is set back behind the prevailing building line of the hipped-roof bungalows, which dominate the streetscene. The extension would therefore fail to reinforce the predominant pattern of development which characterises Branksome Drive.
6. It is also appreciated that the appeal property was badly damaged by floods in December 2015, and like his neighbours the appellant wishes to make it more resilient by incorporating living accommodation at first floor level. This is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') which advocates that planning should help mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, the Framework also seeks to secure high quality design, and confirms that it is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Thus, despite recognising the benefits of the extension and empathising with the appellant's position, including the effects of flooding on his health, these factors do not justify granting planning permission for a form of development that would fail to adequately reflect its surroundings.
7. I therefore conclude that by reason of its unsympathetic size, scale and design the proposal would not be well related to the existing character of the locality and would detract from the streetscene within Branksome Drive. As a result, it conflicts with Policy D1 of the *Replacement Unitary Development Plan for the Bradford District* (RUDP) which, amongst other things, states that all development proposals should be well related to the existing character of the locality. The proposal is also contrary to the Council's *Householder Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) which advises that the size, position and form of extensions should maintain or improve the character and quality of the original house and the wider area.

Living Conditions – 56 and 58A Branksome Drive

8. As part of the proposal side-facing windows would be installed in the gable ends facing roughly north and south. One would serve a first floor kitchen and the other would provide additional light to a bedroom/sitting room.
9. Due to the position and orientation of the windows occupants of the appeal property would be able to overlook the adjacent rear gardens at nos. 56 and 58A Branksome Drive on either side. Some limited, angled views of the side-facing first floor window at no.58A would also be possible.
10. However, the proposed windows would be small, secondary openings. Both the first-floor kitchen and the bedroom/sitting room would also be served by much larger, rear-facing windows. I therefore find no reasons why obscure-glazing could not be used in gable-ends. This could be adequately controlled and enforced through the use of a suitably worded planning condition and would prevent any harmful overlooking of neighbouring properties. A planning condition could also be worded to prevent potential future owners simply replacing the obscure glazing with windows of their choice in the future.

11. Subject to the use of obscure glazed windows in the side elevations of the extension I conclude that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the privacy or living conditions of the occupants of 56 and 58A Branksome Drive. As such, there is no conflict with Policy UR3 of the *RUDP for the Bradford District* which states that development will be permitted provided that it does not have an adverse effect on the surrounding environment or the occupants of adjoining land. In this regard there is also no conflict with the *Householder SPD* which advocates that extensions and alterations should not cause unacceptable harm to the privacy of neighbours.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupants of 56 or 58A Branksome Drive. However, its size, scale and design would be at odds with its surroundings and would detract from the streetscene within Branksome Drive.
14. For this reason, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Birkinshaw

INSPECTOR