

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 February 2017

by Daniel Hartley BA Hons MTP MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/W/16/3163789

9 Tunshill Grove, Milnrow, Rochdale OL16 3DY

- 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 Alex Ribchester against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00693/HOUS, dated 6 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is a side extension with front and rear dormers and the erection of a front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of development from the Council's refusal notice as this more succinctly describes the appeal proposal. The proposal also includes the erection of a front porch and so I have included this in the description of development in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Site and proposal

4. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached bungalow which has only pedestrian access to the front (Tunshill Grove) and both pedestrian and vehicular access to the rear. It falls within an established residential area which includes mainly semi-detached dwellings. The roof of the property steps down from the roof of the neighbouring residential property (the rear roof slope includes an existing dormer) and there is an existing detached garage positioned to the side/rear of the bungalow. The dwelling is positioned at the end of a cul-de-sac and there is a public footpath running along its eastern boundary. Beyond this there are other bungalows which are positioned off Newfield View.
 5. It is proposed to demolish the existing garage and to erect a side extension which would be in line with the front and rear elevations of the dwelling. The
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roof of the dwelling would be raised in height so that it matched the height of the neighbouring semi-detached property. The existing dormer within the rear roof slope would be removed and the proposal would include a front and a rear dormer to the original roof slopes and a front and a rear dormer to the proposed side extension. There would be an integral garage within the side elevation and a pitched roofed brick built porch to the front elevation of the house. The dormer fronts and sides would be rendered as would the front and the rear walls of the resultant dwelling. The side elevation of the proposed extension would be finished in brick.

Character and appearance

6. The proposed side extension would be built in very close proximity to the boundary with the public footpath which is immediately to the east of the appeal property. I accept that there is an existing garage which is already relatively close to this boundary. However, the scale of this garage is such that it does not have a dominating impact in the street-scene and this pattern of development is repeated on the other side of the cul-de-sac. Given the scale and close position of the proposed development to the public footpath, I consider that it would have a very dominating and cramped impact when viewed from this area. It would detract from the sense of openness and space which separates the two storey residential development in the east from that in the west.
7. In addition to the above, I do not consider that the proposed side extension would suitably retain the overall balance of symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings. Owing to the width and height of the side extension, it would not appear as a subordinate or proportionate addition to the original dwelling house. The side extension would not include setbacks from either of the main elevations of the house, and it would create a harmful imbalance between the pair of semi-detached properties. Consequently, the extension would have a dominating impact when viewed from within the street-scene. Furthermore, given the width of the extension, the pair of semi-detached houses would appear more like a terrace of houses thereby detracting from the character and appearance of the area.
8. The above adverse impacts would be compounded by the fact that four very large and dominant roof dormers would be included in the rear roof slopes and that there would be no longer a stepped roof line between the appeal property and No 10 Tunshill Grove. The latter is a deliberate design characteristic given the sloping nature of the land from the west to the east.
9. I accept that there are a variety of roof dormers in the locality and that some dwellings do include roof dormers which are similar in size to those that are proposed for the appeal property. However, some of these dormers are very bulky and take up a lot of the roof space. Furthermore, the appeal proposal includes a significant number of very large roof dormers (i.e. four) and, in combination with the size of the side extension, they would harm the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and appear incongruous and dominant within the street-scene.
10. I acknowledge that some properties in the locality have rendered walls, although most are built out of brick. Whilst in principle the use of rendered walls would not be unacceptable in the locality (there is a rendered property on the other side of the cul-de-sac), the predominant use of render instead of

brick for the appeal property would make the extension (including dormers) stand out even more in the street-scene. Given my concerns about the scale, position and height of the proposed side extension, I do not therefore consider that this would be a positive attribute.

11. I have considered the proposed front porch and it would be acceptable in terms of scale and design. Given the boundary landscaping, it would not be conspicuous when viewed from Tunshill Grove. However, whilst this proposal would be acceptable it would not overcome my identified concerns about the rest of the proposed development.
12. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that whilst the porch would be acceptable, the proposed side extension and dormer windows would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and to the area. Therefore, when considered as a whole the proposal would not accord with the design aims of Policy BE/2 and H11 of the adopted Rochdale Unitary Development Plan 2006; the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document "Guidelines and Standards for New Residential Development" 2016 and Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

13. I have taken into account the representations made by other interested parties. A number of the comments made have been addressed above. I have considered the position of all windows and the separation distances from all surrounding residential properties. I do not consider that the proposals would cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding residential properties in respect of light, privacy or outlook. In addition, I have considered the position of the street lamps in the area and I do not consider that the proposal would materially block out light to the adjacent footpath.
14. The Courts have held that the effect of a proposal upon property values is not a material planning consideration. In any event, I do not have any objective evidence before me to indicate that the proposal would have an adverse effect upon property values. The site is not within an area which is at risk of flooding, and I do not have any objective evidence to substantiate the claim that the proposal would give rise to surface water flooding issues in the area. In respect of foundations, this would be a matter to be controlled as part of the submission of a Building Regulations application. Furthermore, the grant of planning permission would not override any separate legal requirement to adhere to the deeds of the property.
15. I note that the appellant has raised concerns about the Planning Committee meeting. He considers that there were conflicts of interest and that decision making was unfairly influenced because a local Councillor lives very close to the appeal property. However, the way that the Planning Committee conducted itself is not a matter for me to consider as part of the determination of this appeal. It would be open to the appellant to take this matter up with the Council and/or the Local Government Ombudsman. I have determined this appeal on its individual planning merits taking into account relevant planning policies.
16. None of the other matters raised alter my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all others matters raised, I conclude that the proposal as a whole would not accord with the development plan for the area. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Daniel Hartley

INSPECTOR