
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2017

by Keith Manning BSc (Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/D/16/3167717

42 Rivington Road, Springhead, Oldham OL4 4RJ

- 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 Mrs Joanne Jones against the decision of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HH/339055/16, dated 20 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front dormer extension at 42 Rivington Road, Springhead, Oldham OL4 4RJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref HH/339055/16, dated 20 August 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council correctly observed in an informative to its decision that there is a discrepancy on one of the plans (Dwg. 42/BEL/06) as between the proposed front elevation and the proposed roof plan shown alongside. It is of course the responsibility of applicants for planning permission to ensure that submitted drawings are correct in every detail. However, having considered the discrepancy referred to, I am satisfied that the proposed elevation drawings are sufficiently unambiguous for this discrepancy to be an obvious, if unfortunate, draughtsmanship error which may be disregarded accordingly in favour of those drawings.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area with particular reference to the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within an extensive residential estate developed, I am informed, in the 1970s. The estate is characterised by a particular style of bungalow and a sizeable majority of these have been modified by the enlargement or addition of dormers across the front facing roof planes, mainly as a result of permissions granted by the Council.
5. The appellant's comprehensive survey demonstrates this to be the case and a walk around the area confirms that it is rendered locally distinctive not only by the fact of the dormer extensions but by their variety. Whilst many are narrower than that proposed and include those which incorporate a front facing gable, there are examples of dormers under forward facing roof slopes occupying much of the width of the original front roofs, broadly similar in type to that proposed in this instance.
6. Summerseat Close, near to the appeal site, contains a concentration of dormers very similar to the type proposed at the appeal site and further examples also occur along the spine road, Belmont Avenue. Whilst that part of Rivington Road containing the appeal site is characterised by front dormer extensions of the less extensive variety they are varied nonetheless and No 42 itself is seen against the backdrop of a dormer broadly similar to that proposed on the elevated Heywood Lane to the rear. The street scene typifying the locality as a whole is therefore not uniform in terms of dormer additions and does not rely on any such uniformity for its essential character and appearance. The proposed dormer at No 42 Rivington Road would not therefore unduly disrupt any pattern or rhythm that could be said to be essential to the maintenance of an overall cohesive design quality. On the contrary, the variety of approach across the estate, within broad parameters including full width dormers, is arguably the dominant characteristic.
7. Policies cited by the Council are within the Oldham Local Development Framework Development Plan Document – Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. Policy 9 concerns environmental quality including protection of visual amenity, whilst Policy 20 concerning design seeks, amongst other things, to reinforce local identity.
8. Bearing in mind the evidence adduced by the appellant and what I saw on my visit to the area I am not persuaded that the proposed development represents poor design in context, as would be prevented by either the development plan policies referred to or the National Planning Policy Framework. I do not consider it would erode the character of the locality taken as a whole; and I am not persuaded on the basis of any clear evidence that the characteristics of the property itself or the narrower street scene of this particular part of Rivington Road are sufficiently sensitive to variety of approach to dormer provision as to render the proposal inherently harmful in the context they provide.
9. For the above reasons I do not consider the proposed development to conflict with the development plan or any other relevant expression of policy. Having taken into account all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Keith Manning

Inspector