
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2017

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

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

Decision date: 17 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B2355/D/17/3179992

23 Helmshore Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, BB4 4BG

- 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 Ayoob Ali against the decision of Rossendale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/0202, dated 8 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor extension at 23 Helmshore Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, BB4 4BG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2017/0202, dated 8 February 2017, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawing nos. 1370: Page 1/4-Existing Layout; Page 2/4-Existing Layout; Page 3/4-Proposed Layout (19/04/2017); and, Page 4/4-Proposed Layout (19/04/2017).
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extension hereby approved shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No. 23 and the locality.

Reasons

3. No. 23 fronts onto the western side of Helmshore Road, which thereabouts is characterised, for the most part, by a range of 2-storey residential properties. The appeal dwelling differs from the neighbouring development in a number of respects. For example, it comprises for the most part of an L-shaped single-storey building, the longest leg of which runs in a north-south direction across the site. A 2-storey annexe projects from the rear of the single-storey main building. Furthermore, No. 23 is set back from Helmshore Road beyond a large front garden, which contains some planting and a relatively tall front boundary wall. Due to the screening effect of the garden planting and front wall, views of the building from Helmshore Road are generally limited to the
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roof of the single-storey element and the front gable of the 2-storey rear annexe. As a result, when seen from that highway, No. 23 has an unusually plain and largely featureless appearance, in stark contrast to the detailed 2-storey frontages of the properties on either side, which are clearly visible from Helmsore Road, being situated much closer to the highway. At present No. 23 contributes little to the street scene.

4. The proposal includes the addition of a first floor extension above much of the longest leg of the existing L-shaped single-storey main building.
5. The Council's *Supplementary Planning Document-Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties, 2008* (SPD) indicates that a frequent problem with domestic extensions is when incompatible designs are proposed, resulting in a poor relationship with the original building. Therefore, a domestic extension will not normally be permitted unless, amongst other things, the proposal gives the appearance of being part of the original building. Specific features, such as doors, windows and roof style and eaves, should particularly reflect the dwelling's original shape, size, alignment and architectural integrity. It should complement the original building by reflecting the design, massing, bulk, detail, proportion, scale and style of the original building, so as not to dominate it. However, the SPD acknowledges that there may be certain circumstances where its standards are not applicable and it confirms that proposals will be considered on their individual merits.
6. I acknowledge that the proposed first floor extension, which would alter the property from predominantly single-storey to 2-storey, would significantly change its appearance. Whilst in this respect it would conflict with the SPD guidance, I consider that in the particular circumstances set out below, that would not be fatal to the proposal.
7. The proposed first floor extension would have a pitched roof in keeping with the style of the existing dwelling. At the northern and southern ends of its front elevation there would be a first floor gable feature. The balanced arrangement of these features and the regular pattern of fenestration in the front elevation of the proposed first floor extension would be visible from Helmsore Road, from where it would appear to add positively to the character of the relatively plain existing building. Contrary to the Council's assertion, the proposed first floor front gable features would not amount to alien additions to the property or the locality. I consider that they would be comparable in scale to the front gable of the shorter leg of the existing L-shaped single-storey building, which would remain, and the existing rear annexe also has a first floor level front gable. Furthermore, as the appellant has pointed out, the street scene includes a number of properties with larger, 2-storey front gable features. Although the proposal would greatly increase the bulk of the dwelling, it would not appear either cramped within the property's extensive plot or out of place in the wider street scene, which includes detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. In my judgement, the proposed first floor extension would complement and enhance the character and appearance of the original dwelling.
8. Notwithstanding the identified conflict with the SPD, I conclude on balance that the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No. 23 and the locality would be acceptable and it would accord with the aims of Policies 1, 23 and 24 of the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: The Way Forward*

(2011-2026). Insofar as these Policies give support to development which is of a high standard of design and complements and enhances its surroundings, they are consistent with the aims of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework).

Other matters

9. The proposal would also include a small extension to the existing first floor rear balcony of the property, which would be unlikely to increase the potential for overlooking of neighbouring properties to any material extent. More generally, I agree with the Council that the proposal would be unlikely to cause undue harm to the daylight, outlook or privacy enjoyed by neighbouring residents, given the size of Nos. 23's plot and the distances to neighbouring properties.

Conditions

10. The Council has suggested 3 conditions which it considers should be imposed in the event of planning permission being granted in this case. I consider that, in addition to the normal commencement condition, a condition would be necessary, in the interests of clarity, to ensure that the proposed development would be carried out in accordance with the application plans. A condition would also be necessary, in the interests of visual amenity, to ensure that the materials used in the external surfaces of the proposed extension match those used in the existing building.

Conclusions

11. I conclude that the proposal would accord with the Development Plan and it would amount to sustainable development under the terms of the Framework. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR