



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2017

by J D Westbrook BSc(hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4718/D/17/3180215

60 Leeds Road, Dewsbury, WF12 7BG

- 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 Gulab Begum against the decision of Kirklees Metropolitan Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/62/91126/E, dated 30 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as a bathroom porch extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area around Leeds Road and Charles Street.

Reasons

3. No 60 Leeds Road is a stone-built, three-storey, end-terraced house, situated on the southern side of Leeds Road, close to its junction with Charles Street. Charles Street slopes steeply up from Leeds Road such that the appeal property is in an elevated and prominent position. The surrounding area is largely residential, although there is a relatively modern medical centre opposite to No 60 across Charles Street.
4. The terrace, of which No 60 is a part, consists of 7 houses. There are 3 houses with small front second floor gable windows arranged symmetrically each side of a central house, which is set a little further forward than the rest of the terrace, and which has a larger front gable feature. This symmetry and uniformity is a significant feature in the appearance of the immediate surroundings. The houses have long front gardens, each with access from a communal front path. There is a further open area of land between the path and the boundary wall on the south side of Leeds Road. There is a communal path also at the rear of the terrace, which runs along the rear elevations of the houses and which separates the houses from their rear yards and outhouses.
5. The proposed development would involve the construction of an extension to the front of No 60 with a monopitch roof. From the submitted plans, it appears that the new extension would be around 2.5 metres square and that it would include a wet room and a large porch. It would also involve the construction of a new set of steps with a handrail forward of the new structure.

6. By virtue of the overall scale and the degree of forward projection of the proposed extension, I consider that it would be a prominent and over-dominant feature at the front of a terrace of houses which exhibits a degree of symmetry of design and appearance. This unsympathetic appearance would be exacerbated by the steep slope away from the front of the house, which is not clear from the submitted plans and which would increase the overall visual impact of the proposal, particularly with the addition of more steps.
7. The Council notes that Policy BE14 of its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) supports modest front extensions. However, it would appear that permissions have only been granted elsewhere for up to 1.5m projections from the front elevation. In this case the scale of the proposed extension, with a projection of some 2.5 metres, is larger than would normally be supported by the Council, while the width of the extension further exaggerates its over-dominant appearance within the row. The Council contends, therefore, that the scale and design is harmful to the visual amenity of the area with regard to its effect on both the host property and the row of terraced houses of which it is a part. I concur with that assessment.
8. The appellant has produced a supporting letter relating to a medical condition, which indicates that a downstairs toilet would be advantageous. She has also been referred for assessment by the Council's Accessible Homes Team, although I have no details of any results from this assessment. I have sympathy with Mrs Begum and her condition, and I also note that it is not possible to extend out from the rear of the property. However, from the information before me, I am not satisfied that the proposed front extension represents the only solution to her desire for a more accessible toilet. In this case, therefore, the personal circumstances of the appellant do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area that would be caused by the proposal as submitted.
9. In conclusion, I find that the proposed front extension, by virtue of its scale and detrimental effect on the symmetry and overall uniformity of the design of the terrace of which it is a part, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Leeds Road and Charles Street. It would, on this basis, conflict with Policies D2 and BE14 of the UDP, both of which require that developments, including extensions, should not be harmful to the visual amenity of an area.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR