



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2017

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/D/17/3179288

4 Leesfield Road, Meadowfield DH7 8NJ

- 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 Rogers against the decision of Durham County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/17/00544/FPA, dated 15 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is to demolish single storey side extension & build two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - The character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - The living conditions of occupiers of the adjoining property, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is located at the entrance to Leesfield Road from Station Road. The property, a modestly sized dwelling, is typical of this part of Leesfield Road; semi-detached, two storey bay at the front, hipped roof, long rear garden but with limited space at the side of the house. There is a greater variation in house types further afield on Station Road and Leesfield Gardens, but the overall scale and grain of development is broadly consistent.
4. The flank elevation of No 4 is prominent in views at the entrance to Leesfield Road. There is a garage block with a forecourt, set back from the rear edge of the pavement, immediately to the northeast of the appeal property. This allows a long, more open view towards the appeal property's flank elevation than is typically found along Leesfield Road. To the rear of No 4, and visible above the flat-roofed garage block, are views towards the wooded area behind.
5. Despite the limited space at the sides of dwellings, extensions at the side are nonetheless not uncommon. Nor, I saw, are examples where the first floor elements of two storey extensions are set on stilts above a recessed ground floor element below. However, whilst the proposal would in general terms

follow this broad pattern of development, it would deviate from it in a manner that I find would be both harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and to that of the surrounding area.

6. At the side, the front face of the two storey extension would be set so far back as to be broadly level with the rear elevation. The result, in the open views towards the site across the adjacent forecourt and garage block, would be a slab-like flank elevation that would extend a considerable distance to the rear. The extended element would be deeper than the depth of the existing dwelling and would, as a consequence, appear as a highly disproportionate addition to the dwelling. This would be harmful not just to the character and appearance of the host property, which is essentially a modest semi-detached dwelling, but also to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, where it would introduce a large and bulky form of development not typical of that found on and around Leesfield Road.
7. There are elements of the proposal which would restore balance to the pair of semi-detached dwellings that the appeal property is part of. The single storey extension and a portion of the two storey extension broadly follow the approach taken on the adjoining half of the semi. However, the additional and substantial rearward projecting portion which would incorporate the garage with master bedroom above, would cause the extension to dominate the rear and side elevations of both the host building and, together with the adjoining half of the semi, that of the pair.
8. Thus, the design and scale of the proposed extension would not be sympathetic to the host dwelling, or to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore fail to accord with saved policy Q9 of the City of Durham – Local Plan. It would also fail to secure high quality design, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as one of its core planning principles and expanded upon in Part 7 (the Framework).
9. It is true that there are a variety of forms of extension on properties along Leesfield Road and the adjacent streets. However, it has not been explained how or why parallels with other examples should be drawn, and I have in any event considered the proposal before me on its merits. I give the presence of other extensions only limited weight. I also saw that there are trees around the appeal site which may provide some screening of the extension, but these would not, in my judgement, be sufficient to offset the harm that I have identified above.

Living Conditions

10. The single storey ground floor element of the proposed extension, and the wider part of the two storey side / rear extension would, in broad terms, reflect the form of extensions at the adjoining half of the semi. However, the additional rearward extent of the narrower element of the two storey extension, which would house the garage and master bedroom above, would add significant bulk to the rear of the property.
11. Although this element of the extension would be positioned on the opposite side of the plot to No 5, it would nonetheless have a significant and looming presence at the rear. I have already identified that the extension would dominate the side and rear of the host property and Nos. 4 and 5 as a pair. The degree of dominance that would arise would also result in the extension

having an overbearing impact upon the rear of No. 5, which would be felt particularly from areas immediately at the rear of that property. The proposal would fail to secure good design as set out in Part 7 of the Framework, and also fail to achieve one of the Framework's core planning principles of always seeking to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR