
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019

by Diane Cragg DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/D/19/3232997

New House, Cooper Street, Springhead OL4 4QT

- 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 Mark Wilson against the decision of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref HH/343133/19, dated 25 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is ground floor extension with development of roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council refers to the extension as a rear extension as does the appellant in his statement. However, the drawings indicate that the extension is to the front elevation. For consistency with the Councils and appellants submissions I have referred to the extension as being on the rear elevation. However, it is not for me to determine as part of this appeal which elevation is the principal elevation of the appeal property.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the development on the setting and thereby significance of a designated heritage asset, Ashfield House, a grade II listed building.

Reasons

4. New House is a detached property providing accommodation over two floors in a dwelling designed with single storey eaves and with bedrooms in the roof space. It has a detached double garage which sits to the side and adjacent to the dwellings enclosed amenity space.
5. Ashfield House is a grade II listed building located immediately adjacent to the appeal site. It is divided into two properties with parking and outbuildings to the rear. There are two further relatively modern properties to the front and within the environs of the listed building.
6. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, (the Act) requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or

- its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced.
 8. Ashfield House is described in the list description as dating back to the Early C19. It is constructed of watershot hammer-dressed stone with graduated stone slate roof. The side and rear flat roofed extensions, according to the list description, were part of the structure when it was listed in 1986. The significance of this heritage asset relates primarily to its age and architectural interest. However, the height of the building relative to its surroundings gives it a physical presence in its immediate environment and in views towards it.
 9. The rear elevation of the appeal property sits roughly in line with the rear of the listed building. The effect of the extension would be to bring the elevation forward towards the front elevation of Ashfield House. The height and width of the extension, where the current low eaves line would be replaced with a gable, would be more prominent. Although the new window and patio door openings would relate acceptably to the surrounding design details, the large gable would significantly increase the mass of the building. The extension's width and height would be more prominent and there would be a higher level of inter-visibility between the dwelling and the listed building.
 10. Further, on the approach to the site along Cooper Street the road is elevated and the scale and mass of Ashfield House, its surrounding boundary treatment and its juxtaposition with the appeal site and other modern development can be discerned in views over the playground of the adjacent primary school. From this vantage point the proposed extension, with its pitched roof extending from just below the ridge and its forward projection, would impinge on the setting of Ashfield House in that it would appear closer to it and introduce additional built form to its immediate context.
 11. Consequently, I consider the development would adversely affect the setting of Ashfield House by being more conspicuous in views towards it and detracting from the surroundings in which the listed building is experienced.
 12. I acknowledge that there is significant other development within the environs of Ashfield house that has detracted from the setting of the listed building. I have been provided with limited information of the circumstances of these approvals. However, I have had regard to the positioning of adjacent development in considering the proposed development but the existence of these developments does not negate the harm I have found.
 13. Overall, the appeal scheme would detract from the setting of the listed building in a small, but nonetheless unduly harmful way. Accordingly, I find conflict with Policy 9, Policy 20 and Policy 24 of the Oldham Local Development Framework Development Plan Document – Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 9 November 2011 which collectively seek to protect local environmental quality, promote high quality design and protect the special interest and setting of listed buildings.
 14. In accordance with Paragraph 193 of the Framework the finding of harm to a designated heritage asset is a matter to which I must attach considerable importance and great weight. Given the scale of the proposed extension in its

context, I quantify this harm as less than substantial. Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm, in accordance with Paragraph 196 of the Framework, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

15. The Planning Practice Guidance¹ advises that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit.
16. I acknowledge that the extension would provide additional accommodation and in a small way would support investment within Oldham and the aims of Oldham's Housing Strategy. However, whilst I agree that providing good quality housing and supporting the local economy are important and should be afforded some weight, this would not outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm I have identified to the setting and thereby significance of Ashfield House.
17. I accept that the design of the extension would be in keeping with the design of the appeal property. However, I do not regard this as a public benefit as this is a normal expectation of planning policy.

Other Matters

18. I note the appellant's view that there may be other development that would not need planning permission that could be erected at the appeal site. However, I have not been provided with any specific details of an alternative scheme to compare with the appeal development and there is no evidence before me of any realistic prospect that an alternative scheme would be implemented.

Conclusion

19. I find that overall the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset. No material considerations or public benefits have been put forward that are enough to outweigh the harm identified. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Diane Cragg

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723