

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2021

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/W/20/3262420

30 Farfield Road, Shipley BD18 4QP

- 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 Timothy Smith against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01951/FUL, dated 31 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing side extension, garage and greenhouse and construction of 4 bedroom detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description in the banner heading above is taken from the Decision Notice which more concisely describes the proposal than the description given in the Application Form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling with a side garden which includes a garage adjoining a single-storey lean-to side extension. This part of Farfield Road is primarily comprised of pairs of semi-detached dwellings of traditional stone construction dating from the Edwardian period. Houses on this part of the street have consistent front elevations, with hipped roof canopies over cantilevered bay windows and traditionally proportioned fenestration providing a pleasant rhythm and strong character to the street scene.
5. The side garden of No.30 is constrained by an underground water main which crosses the site and prohibits construction within a set distance. As a result, the design of the dwelling tapers from front to back. As a consequence, the design and siting would appear contrived and highlights the limitations of the plot. Despite this tapering occurring towards the rear, the form of the dwelling to that side would be visible in the street scene and would appear incongruous against the existing pattern of development.

6. This incongruity would be compounded by the proposed flat roof of the canopy and bay window. While changes to other properties have inevitably occurred over time, houses in this part of Farfield Road have retained traditional hipped canopies which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. Although I appreciate there are practical considerations which have dictated the design approach, such as the need for level access, the flat roof of the canopy and bay window would be at odds with these positive features of surrounding properties. Subservience in this regard would appear anomalous given other detached properties in the street are commanding in appearance and incorporate these period features. I appreciate the mass of the proposal may correspond to existing houses on the street, and the eaves and ridge lines of the proposed roof may match those of neighbouring pitched roofs. These are appropriate in and of themselves but would not overcome the concerns in this regard.
7. Additionally, the layout and design of the windows on the front elevation of the proposed dwelling would be noticeably different from neighbouring properties. There would be significantly longer heads with a different rhythm of window to stone in comparison. Despite the intention to use materials to match and harmonise with existing dwellings, these features would cause the proposal to fail to relate well to or complement the established rhythm of the street scene. The proposal would therefore be incongruous and harm the character of the surrounding area.
8. I note the suggestion that further details of fenestration could be agreed through a suitably worded condition. However, I am required to determine the proposal as presented to me. In any event, given the constraints described by the appellant, such as the differing floor levels, I am not satisfied that this would alleviate the harm I have identified.
9. Policy DS3 of the Bradford District Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) offers support for innovative and contemporary approaches to design which respond to and complement the local context. In this sense, copying of period features which would amount to a pastiche approach are discouraged. However, I have found the proposal would not complement the local context. Moreover, DS3 also seeks to ensure development responds to the existing positive patterns of development which contribute to the character of the area. On balance, I consider these details would harm the character and appearance of the local area. The location outside of a Conservation Area and away from Listed Buildings does not alter my assessment in this regard.
10. The proposed dwelling would have little separation from No.30. While there is a uniformity to the opposite side of the street which features regularly occurring spacing between the pairs of semis, on the appeal site side this is less common. As such the lesser gap between the proposal and No.30 would not cause harm to the site and surrounding area in this regard.
11. Notwithstanding the lack of harm with regard to the gap I find that overall, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The scheme would therefore be contrary to CS Policies DS1 and DS3 which seek to ensure that development has a good understanding of the site/area and its context.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has drawn my attention to other developments in the area to highlight similarities between these and the proposal. This includes a newer property at the head of the street in what was formerly part of the garden of No.33. However, this property appears to front Lindisfarne Road and is set behind No.33. While photographs of that property and two others have been submitted, I have no details of these developments before me, such as plans or other information on the circumstances that led to their approval. I cannot therefore be satisfied that they are directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Moreover, it does not follow that this proposal should be approved on this basis. Similarly, while I did observe the side extension to No.34 on the site visit, a single-storey extension is not directly comparable to the proposal before me. As such, these other developments referred to are not determinative points in favour of the appeal proposal.

Planning Balance

13. The appellant's statement indicates that the Council has a significant shortfall in its 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Although the evidence referred to is not before me, it has not been disputed by the Council. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 11d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) should be applied.
14. I have found that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area. The proposal conflicts with CS Policies DS1 and DS3 in these respects. These policies are consistent with the Framework in achieving well-designed places and therefore, this conflict should be given significant weight in this appeal.
15. There would be economic benefits from the investment in the construction of the dwelling, subsequent occupation and spending associated with future residents. The delivery of a new dwelling would also make a contribution to the social dimension of sustainable development, while the accessibility and mobility aspirations of the design would add variety to the housing stock.
16. However, whilst all dwellings contribute to housing supply, in this case the delivery of one additional dwelling would only make a limited contribution. In terms of addressing the Council's housing land supply shortfall, the proposal would also have a very limited impact. Accordingly, the benefits of the scheme are limited. While the design may meet minimum space standards, this is a neutral factor in the planning balance.
17. Therefore, taking into account all these matters, the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. Consequently, the proposed development would not constitute sustainable development.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR