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# Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 11 May 2021

**by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 07 June 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/W/20/3265002**

**1 Raymond Road, Scawthorpe, Doncaster DN5 9PP**

- 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 L Stephenson against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 20/01460/FUL, dated 3 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2020.
  - The development proposed is 'New single detached dwelling house to the side of existing dwelling house, with car parking to the front of both new and existing dwelling houses.'
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matter

2. The Council advises that the Emerging Doncaster Local Plan is at an advanced stage, having been submitted for examination in March 2020. However, no emerging policies have been referred to in the reason for refusal. I also have little detail as to whether emerging policies are subject to objection or whether examination has been completed. It is not certain, therefore, whether these policies are likely to be adopted in their current form, or when they may be adopted. Accordingly, I afford limited weight to these policies at this time.

## Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on i) the character and appearance of the area, and ii) the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, in terms of outlook, light, enclosure, overshadowing and access.

## Reasons

### *Character and appearance*

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling located at the southern end of Raymond Road, a residential street. The dwelling has land to the side which is used for access and parking. A detached garage stands behind the parking area, beyond which is a long rear garden. The proposed dwelling would be located within this area to the side of the dwelling, with the existing garage demolished, along with a bay window to the side of No 1 and a single storey extension at the rear.
5. The dwellings on Raymond Road exhibit a strong consistency of form, scale and appearance which together contributes positively to the character of the area. The dwellings stand on a single, continuous building line, with shallow front

gardens used in some cases for off-street parking. With the exception of the terraced dwelling at No 16, each dwelling has access to the side of the property to long, generous rear gardens. The dwellings are red brick, all with bay windows to the front, at either ground or ground and first floor level.

6. The pair at Nos 1 and 3 are slightly narrower in footprint than neighbouring pairs, and have their main entrance doors on the side elevations. No 1, being the end dwelling in the row, benefits from the wider side garden area. I note the equivalent land opposite to the side of No 2 is an access road to business premises at the rear. Though a wider site than others, it is still a narrow space which presents physical constraints for prospective development.
7. The narrow width of the site means the proposed dwelling would stand tight to the boundary with 118 Watch House Lane and its detached garage but would leave just 900mm gap to the side elevation of No 1. This would be a narrower gap than any other within Raymond Road, which are at least twice as wide to facilitate two accesses side-by-side. This close set position would appear cramped and out-of-step with the surrounding pattern of development. Moreover, this narrow gap would be the route to the main entrance to No 1, and the only means of access to the rear gardens of both No 1 and the proposed dwelling. This would result in a concealed and restricted entrance which would upset the legibility of the street scene.
8. The pattern of development would be further altered by the appeal dwelling standing some 865mm behind the main front building line. Consequently, its roof ridge line would also be set back, and it is proposed to have a deeper footprint than No 1, more so given the proposed removal of its existing rear extension. These differences in the scale and alignment of the dwelling with the neighbouring properties would result in the dwelling being a jarring addition which would disrupt the rhythm and pattern of development. This would be evident in views from the street, from dwellings to the side on Watch House Lane and from neighbouring gardens on Raymond Road.
9. The proposal includes partial removal of the front boundary wall to create separate vehicular accesses for the two dwellings. The Council criticises the effectiveness of these short sections of wall in providing a sense of enclosure to the properties. I saw that, in general, there is a regular pattern to the boundary treatment on this side of Raymond Road, with a solid, red brick wall enclosing the front garden areas with consistent gaps in the wall facilitating two entrances side by side for off-street parking. The proposed arrangement would result in shorter sections of wall, one of which would stand isolated in front of the proposed dwelling. This interruption to the boundary wall pattern would cause minor harm when considered in the context of the whole street, but it nonetheless adds to my overall concerns with effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
10. The Council also points to the fact that the dwelling is proposed as a three storey building with a bedroom in the roof space served by rooflights. Whilst I did not see rooflights to be a common feature of the surrounding roofscape, they are modest features and the appeal dwelling otherwise would maintain the same height as neighbouring dwellings in terms of windows, eaves and roof ridge. Therefore, the internal third storey would not manifest itself externally to a harmful degree. However, the narrow form of the dwelling, and the need to provide the main entrance door to the front elevation would result in a visibly

smaller bay window that would add to the impression of the plot being too narrow to accommodate the dwelling, and it being squeezed onto the site in a contrived manner.

11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies PH11 of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (July 1998) (the UDP) and Policy CS 14 of the Doncaster Core Strategy (May 2012) (the CS), which together require development to be of high quality design which contributes to local distinctiveness, integrates well with its immediate and surrounding local area, and resist development which would be at a density or other form which would be detrimental to the character of the surrounding area or would result in an over-intensive development of the site.

#### *Living Conditions*

12. The Council's reason for refusal does not expressly refer to harm to neighbours' living conditions, but it raised concern in these respects in its officer report, and appeal statement, and I infer that reference in the reason for refusal to '*an over-intensive and overdevelopment of the site*' refers, at least in part, to the effect on neighbours' living conditions in addition to the effect on character and appearance. The appellant has taken the opportunity to respond to these concerns through his own statement of case and in final comments. Therefore, I am satisfied that no prejudice would arise from my considering this as a main issue of the appeal.
13. The proposed dwelling would extend a solid, blank wall some 4.17 metres beyond the rear elevation of No 1, following removal of its rear extension, and the side bay window which is south facing and an important source of light would be removed. The dwelling would intrude upon the 45 degree line of the proposed ground floor rear window of No 1, in conflict with the Development Guidance and Requirements Supplementary Planning Document (July 2015) (the DGR). Given its position immediately to the south of No 1 and its expected massing, the proposed dwelling would significantly harm the outlook for occupants of No 1 and would lead to loss of light, increased overshadowing and sense of enclosure to the rear ground floor window and parts of the rear garden closest to the dwelling. This sense of enclosure would be compounded by the imposing blank gable wall occupants would face immediately outside their main entrance door.
14. Moreover, the proposal would leave No 1 without its own private entrance, with occupants required to enter and exit via the narrow, shared passage between the buildings. With no other means of access to the rear gardens, there would be a risk that the access would become impeded by bins or other domestic paraphernalia. There would also be no other external door serving No 1, and therefore the confined space of the shared passage would pose a significant problem for occupants in terms of moving bulky items into or out of the dwelling. Whilst No 3 also has its entrance to the side elevation, it benefits from a wider gap to No 5 and less sense of enclosure or physical impediment as a result. Irrespective of this, however, it is simply poor planning to go from a situation where an existing dwelling has a private entrance in spacious grounds to a shared entrance with such constrained dimensions, the use of which would result in unnecessary impracticality and inconvenience for neighbouring occupants.

15. The Council also points to the proposed reduction in the size of the existing kitchen/dining room of No 1 to below the minimum floorspace levels set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (January 2011). However, the Council concedes the removal of the extension does not require planning permission, and it is possible that other internal works could result in rooms of different sizes to those estimated on the plans. Therefore, this alone would not be reason to withhold permission. However, the overall reduction in floorspace, together with the adverse effects on light, overshadowing, enclosure and access, taken together, means the standard of accommodation for occupants of No 1 would be significantly compromised, contrary to the guidance of the DGR.
16. I recognise that No 1 was vacant at the time of my visit, However, I am mindful that the harm I have identified would be permanent and I must have regard to the consequences for future occupants of the dwelling. I also accept the both dwellings would have ample garden space in spite of the sub-division of the site. However, this would not mitigate for the harm identified.
17. Consequently, for the reasons set out, I find that the proposal would result in significant harm to the living conditions of occupants of 1 Raymond Road, in conflict with the aforementioned Policies CS14 of the CS and PH11 of the UDP in terms of their aims to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupants, land uses and the environment.

### **Other Matters**

18. The Council did not refuse permission in terms of the effect of the proposal on parking and highway safety. I acknowledge representations from interested parties raising concerns at levels of on-street parking in the area. However, given my findings above on the main issues, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter in further detail as it would not be decisive to my overall conclusions.
19. I recognise that the proposal would add to the housing supply, and would be located within a defined settlement where occupants would be able to access and contribute to local services and facilities by means other than the private car. As the proposal is for a single dwelling these benefits would, however, be limited in scale and would not outweigh the harms identified, to which I afford significant weight.

### **Conclusion**

20. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal conflicts with the development plan, taken as a whole, and material considerations in this case do not indicate that permission should be forthcoming in spite of this conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

*K Savage*

INSPECTOR