



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2022

by David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28TH June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/D/22/3294569
416 Halifax Road, Rochdale OL16 2RQ

- 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 David Oldham against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01781/HOUS, dated 20 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as "rear dormer extension and render to all elevations (retrospective) - Resubmission of 21/00907/HOUS".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to rear dormer extension. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to render to all elevations and planning permission is granted for render to all elevations at 416 Halifax Road, Rochdale OL16 2RQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/01781/HOUS, dated 20 December 2021, and subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan. Drg no. 2103-01; Proposed Site Plan. Drg no. 2103-02; Proposed Plans. Drg no. 2103-215 Rev. B; and Proposed Elevations. Drg no.2103-225 Rev. A.

Procedural Matter

2. On the planning application form, the appellant confirms that the work has commenced and has been completed. This reflects my observations on my visit and I have determined this appeal accordingly. However, in my Decision I have not referred to the retrospective nature of the proposal or the resubmission of an application as these are not forms of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is part of a small terrace of properties adjacent to Halifax Road, which on this side of the streetscape is characterised by terraces facing onto the highway. There is some variation in the design and materials used in the

- buildings on this side of the road, and the appeal site building is stepped down from the rest of the terrace. However, the form of the streetscape on this side of the road is predominantly 2-storey buildings with pitched roofs.
5. There is a vehicular access route leading to the side of the property and to the rear, and due to this arrangement both the side and rear elevations of the appeal site are prominent from the public realm. This includes the side elevation which is readily visible from Halifax Road.
 6. The rear dormer extends across almost the full width of the host dwelling, and extends from the rear wall to just below the ridge of the roof. Because of this scale and design, the dormer appears as an overdominant box-like addition which detracts significantly from the appearance of the host building and the terrace.
 7. This incongruous appearance is exacerbated due to the relatively unchanged nature of the rear roofslopes of dwellings in this and the neighbouring terrace. Although there are some alterations, including solar panels and rooflights, the original slope and form of the roofs are still apparent, and this adds to the unfortunate appearance of the dormer particularly when combined with its prominence in views from the public realm.
 8. The host building is set lower than its immediate neighbours in this and the neighbouring terrace. It would also use dark grey cladding which would reflect the colour of a slate roof. However, these considerations would not be sufficient to successfully mitigate the harm arising from the scale and prominence of the proposal.
 9. The appellant submits that a dormer window of similar dimensions as the appeal proposal could be built on another property under permitted development rights, aside from the dormer facing a highway. They also refer to alterations to the rear of dwellings being common in residential areas. However, the permitted development rights referred to do not apply to the appeal site, and I have determined this appeal on its own merits, including consideration of the prominence of the site in views from the public realm.
 10. The appellant has provided photographs and details of dormer windows elsewhere on Halifax Road and in the wider area. However, these are some distance from the appeal site and do not set a prevailing context which supports the appeal proposal. Furthermore, I have not been provided with full details of those developments so as to determine if they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, including in respect of site history and context. This includes the developments on Ditton Mead Close, where the evidence suggests that dormers were more prevalent in the streetscape. In any event, a number of the examples referred to demonstrate the harm to character and appearance that can arise from large and insensitively located dormers.
 11. The proposal includes the application of cream roughcast render to all elevations of the host building. The Council has not objected to this element of the proposal on the basis of the original cream render on the building and the use of render on a number of dwellings in the vicinity. This reflects my own observations, and I consider that the application of render as proposed would not harm the character or appearance of the host building and the area.

12. Notwithstanding my conclusions on the application of render, I conclude that the rear dormer would lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the area. The rear dormer would therefore be contrary to policy DM1 of the Council's Core Strategy 2016 which requires development to be of a high quality design. The proposal would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of achieving well-designed places. It would also be contrary to the advice of the Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development SPD 2016 which states that rear dormers should be modest in size and not occupy a disproportionately large portion of the roof.

Other Matters

13. The Council state that the site is within the setting of the St John the Baptist's Church and a War Memorial, both of which are Grade II Listed Buildings. However, it considers that the proposal does not obstruct any key views of the Church or the War Memorial. Although the appeal site and the Listed Buildings are experienced in the same context, the views from the access road to the side and rear are not the main views in which the heritage assets are experienced, and these views are already compromised by later piecemeal development. The Council has concluded that the proposal would have a neutral impact on the designated heritage assets, including their setting.
14. Based on what I have seen and read, I conclude that the proposal would preserve the setting of the Listed Buildings, including any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. However, a lack of harm in this respect is a neutral factor in the overall planning balance, and does not lead me to a different conclusion in the wider consideration of character and appearance.
15. I have had regard to the appellant's personal circumstances and their wish to improve their family home. However, these personal considerations are not sufficient to outweigh the significant harm I have identified.

Conclusion

16. I have concluded that the rear dormer would lead to significant harm in respect of character and appearance. However, the application of render would not be harmful, and this element of the proposal is clearly severable from the rear dormer. I shall therefore issue a split decision to dismiss the appeal in respect of the rear dormer, but allow it in relation to the application of render to all elevations.
17. The Council has indicated the conditions it considers necessary on its questionnaire. A condition in respect of the commencement of the development is not required as the development has commenced. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary in the interests of certainty.

David Cross

INSPECTOR