
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 October 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/D/22/3299586

The Old Chapel, Fenwick Lane, Fenwick, Doncaster DN6 0EZ

- 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 and Mrs Robert Murray against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02575/FUL, dated 16 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first-floor extension to existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Since refusing planning permission, the Council has revoked the Developer Guidance and Requirements Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to which the evidence refers. It has also published Transitional Developer Guidance (TDG), which has replaced the SPD. The appellants have submitted comments in relation to these changes, which I have taken into account. As the TDG has not been adopted, I attach limited weight to it.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The proposal is a first-floor rear extension to the appeal property, which is a converted red brick Chapel that according to the Council dates from about 1896. Various domestic features have been introduced to the appeal building including a rear conservatory and a chimneystack, which have diluted the ecclesiastical character of the original building. Nevertheless, with its steeply pitched main roof, long arched windows facing the road and projecting porch, the appeal building remains clearly legible as a former Chapel. It is not a listed building nor is the site within a conservation area.
5. The Old Chapel stands within a predominantly residential area within which dwellings vary in age, type, style, and general appearance. From what I saw, existing buildings are largely of brick construction with limited and restrained use of render. The overall character of the local area is harmonious variety, with brick as a dominant and unifying material.

6. The proposed extension would be modern in design with clean rectilinear lines, zinc clad walls, a flat roof and a feature window at one corner. The top of the new addition would be set noticeably below the main ridge line with no increase to the building's footprint.
7. In my experience, residential extensions that differ in shape and appearance due to their design and materials used can positively contribute to the diversity of an area and add visual interest to the street scene to which they belong. Zinc clad extensions are not an uncommon feature of buildings in built up areas, as the appellant points out with examples provided. Furthermore, given the individual character of the host building, the Old Chapel also offers an interesting opportunity for a bespoke scheme that could make a definitive architectural statement.
8. However, in this case, the proposal would be a sizeable addition. The considerable scale and mass of the new built form, coupled with its solid angular form and a flat roof would combine to give the appearance of an overly large 'box like' addition. The visually strong horizontal lines of the new extension and those of its windows would accentuate the bulk of the new addition and jar with the pitched slopes of the main roof. The extensive use of zinc, as proposed, would also draw the eye as a discordant and uncharacteristic feature within an area of predominantly brick buildings. These impressions would be most pronounced from within the site and from short sections of Fenwick Lane.
9. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. It therefore conflicts with Policies 41 and 44 of the Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035. These policies aim to ensure that development is of high-quality design and responds positively to the context and character of the area. It is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.
10. Once complete, the proposal would provide additional living accommodation in the form of a bedroom and bathroom. I acknowledge that the living conditions of others would not be affected by the proposal. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR