The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/D/23/3317393
4 Beech Close, Bolton BL2 3EB

- 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 Philip Chadburn against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The application Ref 12761/21, dated 3 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2022.
- The development proposed is the erection of front and rear flat roof dormers and garage conversion.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposal includes a new dormer extension on each of the front and rear roof slopes of the appeal property, which is a semi-detached bungalow situated towards the entrance to a residential cul-de-sac. There is an existing dormer on the rear roof slope of No 4 and the semi-detached bungalow at 10 Beech Close, which are both partly visible from the road.

4. The proposed front dormer would not project above the ridge of the host building, and it would be set back from the eaves. The new addition would, however, extend across much of the host roof slope and, in so doing, visually dominate the front of the dwelling. The considerable width and flat roof of the proposal would cause the new dormer to appear as an overly large 'box-like' addition, the presence of which would give the finished dwelling an awkward top-heavy appearance. Due to its elevated position, the new front dormer would also be a prominent feature along Beech Close. As the only example of such development in the local street scene to which No 4 belongs, the new front dormer would be obtrusive and a discordant feature within the local area.

5. The proposed rear dormer would also be a sizeable addition. It would be noticeably wider and taller than the existing roof structure to the replaced. As the proposed rear dormer would be at the back of the host building, away from the road, it would not be readily evident in public views. It would, however, be visible from the rear gardens of the properties on either side of the site and the

track that is denoted Back Rigby Lane North on the plans. From these vantage points, the scale of the new rear dormer would relate poorly to the style and modest proportions of the host dwelling and its pitched main roof.

6. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *House Extensions* (SPD) advises that the scale of a proposed dormer should always be a subordinate feature within the roof plane. It also notes that a well-designed extension should be in proportion to the existing dwelling. Neither of the new dormers could reasonably be described in this way nor would they be perceived as such in views from the road and the gardens of nearby properties.

7. I saw that some properties in the local area include dormers that are visible from the road including those to which the appellant has referred and provided photographs. None of these cases include both front and rear dormers, as proposed, and so they are not directly comparable with the appeal scheme. In each of the examples cited, the existing dormers serve to demonstrate that roof level additions can have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the area to which it belongs. In my view, these dormers have not compromised the character or appearance of the individual properties or the area more generally to the extent that justifies a further unsatisfactory development.

8. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed dormers would materially harm the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with Policy CG3 of Bolton's Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Council's SPD. This policy and guidance promote good urban design and aim to ensure that development is compatible with the surrounding area. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) insofar as it requires new development to be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the local area.

9. The Council raises no objection to the proposed conversion of the garage to provide living accommodation. According to the submitted ground floor plan, this element of the appeal scheme would be served by new doors inserted into the sidewall of this building. However, as the submitted drawings do not include elevations of the garage, as existing or proposed, I am unable to fully assess this part of the proposal nor issue a split decision that grants planning permission solely for it because some key details are not shown on the plans.

10. Once complete, the additional living accommodation would better suit the personal needs of the appellant and his family and improve their living conditions. The appellant is also critical of the Council's handling of the application and the considerable time it took to reach a decision. In his view, the Council placed too much reliance on the guidance within the SPD, which he regards as subjective, loose and out of date. However, these considerations do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

11. In conclusion, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR