



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2023

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16/08/2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/23/3319682

42 Westfield Crescent, Sheffield, S20 5AQ

- 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 Bishop against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03323/FUL dated 9 September 2022 was refused by notice dated 6 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of two-storey side and rear extension and single-storey front extension to dwelling house.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.
3. There are several elements to the appeal proposal, however, the refusal reason is specific to the proposed two-storey side extension. The Council raise no issue with the proposed single storey front extension nor the proposed rear extension and based upon the evidence before me, and my site visit, I find no reason to conclude differently on these elements. On this basis the appeal will focus upon the two-storey side extension element in relation to the main issue identified below.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is situated within a residential area, which consists of mainly two-storey, brick-built properties with double pitched roofs, and there is a mix of dwelling types including terraces and semi-detached dwellings within the vicinity. As part of my site visit, I noted that the properties within this residential area appear to follow well defined building lines. The dwellings at corners of road junctions, as is commonplace for most corner plots, have side amenity spaces which contribute to the general openness of the area as well as being a quality which distinguishes the area i.e., it is a positive part of the character of the residential area and the appeal site.
6. The appeal site has a side amenity area, and access gate onto Ash Street, and at the time of my site visit I noted that the property on the opposite side of the

road, also on the junction within a corner plot, has a similar side amenity space, which is perhaps more visually prominent due to a reduced hedge height on the boundary by comparison to the appeal site. The appeal site is surrounded by relatively high hedging, which makes views into the side amenity space more limited from the front and side. I acknowledge that the appeal site does have a wider garden than its opposing neighbour, but this does not overcome the visual implications as a result of the site context as outlined below within this decision letter.

7. I note that the proposal before me is a revision to a previously refused scheme which, by comparison, sought to extend closer to the side boundary with Ash Street. The amendments do make the proposals appear subservient to the host dwelling itself, however, the proposal still seeks permission for a two-storey side extension which would extend into the side amenity space, which would erode the character of the area and the general openness. A reduction in bulk and scale does not overcome the loss of openness provided by the existing amenity space.
8. Views of the appeal site are most prominent from the south when viewed further down Ash Street. The absence of any two-storey development within the side amenity space, beyond the original dimensions of the host property and that of the property opposite, cumulatively contributes to the verdant appearance of the area as well as general openness around the junction between Ash Street and Westfield Crescent. In addition to the openness of the area, I find that the proposal would also project unacceptably beyond the building line of Ash Street. At the time of my site visit, I walked down Ash Street and viewed the property from the south just before the road starts to bend. When viewed from this point, the rear of the host dwelling is already prominent as far as it projects forward of the building line set by the properties to the south. There is also a slight fall in site levels towards the south and I note that the appeal site stands at a higher level than the property on the opposite side of the road. The combination of these factors means the appeal site is in a highly prominent position visually. The proposal, for a two-storey side extension, would protrude further beyond the building line would overall lead to an overly dominant structure in a prominent position, further supporting that the proposal is unacceptable.
9. I acknowledge that there are other designs and sizes of dwelling within the immediate area however, the refusal reason is not based upon specific design or matters relating to its relationship with the host dwelling. The refusal reason, and main issue, relates to the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area as a result of bulk, scale and massing being built in an area which is currently open to the side of the property, which is important as part of the character of the area as outlined above. The appellant states that there are larger scale buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site as well as new dwellings on a nearby re-development site being considerably larger in height and footprint to the appeal proposal. Once again, I would reiterate that the main issue, as a result of bulk, scale, and massing, is specific to the site in this case due to the prominent location.
10. Taking into account the appeal sites relationship with its location, the existing built form, the open space around the junction as well as the building line discussed earlier, the proposal results in unacceptable impact as a result of site location and context. This is not alleviated by the acknowledged gap which

would be retained between the proposed side extension and the plot boundary. The presence of the hedge on the appeal site boundary would not mitigate the presence of two-storey built form. As acknowledged by the appellant, corner plots do present their difficulties and often reduces the possibilities for the siting of any extensions.

11. The appellant has referenced a two-storey side extension on a corner plot which is stated to be at the junction of High Street with Moor Crescent in the same general area. Two photographs have been submitted; however, no further information has been submitted such as the Council's decision and approved plans, which would enable me to undertake any analysis as to the similarities of that proposal to the appeal before me. As a result of the limited information provided, albeit I do acknowledge that the photographs show an extension close to the highway boundary, this limits the weight I am able to apply to this example within the consideration of this appeal. Despite this, each case should be considered on its own merits, and I do not find that a single example, with limited information, would justify the proposal before me being allowed as a result of the site context and reasoning I have provided above within this decision letter.
12. It is acknowledged that, due to the proposal being in a corner plot, it is inevitable that any proposals would be visible. Despite this, it should be kept in mind that character and appearance are separate matters. Appearance is the outward, visible qualities of an area whereas character is the sum of all qualities which distinguish the area. In this case, there would evidently be impact upon the appearance of the area, but ultimately the main issue lies with built form encroaching into the side amenity space which I find is a quality which distinguishes the area around the road junction which is currently open as well as being forward of the building line as discussed. As I have previously outlined, in isolation the extensions could be said to be appropriate and proportionate to the host dwelling, however, within the site context and taking into account the factors which I have outlined, I do not find that the design and boundary treatments outlined would reduce the proposals prominence to an acceptable degree.
13. The appellant has submitted a drawing, which is stated to demonstrate what could be achieved as permitted development involving the alteration of the existing hipped roof to a gable on the side elevation to allow a loft conversion, along with the construction of a two-storey rear extension. It is stated that such alterations would provide the additional accommodation required by the appellant, but the appellants submit that this would have a greater impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling than the appeal scheme as well as resulting in a more complex roof form, not in keeping with the character of the house or area.
14. It is not within the scope of this appeal to consider whether proposals would constitute permitted development. I would stress therefore, that the proposals submitted under drawing number G02 (Titled Proposed under PD) are not accompanied by, for example, a Certificate of Lawfulness from the Council which would confirm their ability to be implemented as permitted development as part of a fall-back position for the appeal site. Other than the alteration of the existing hipped roof to a gable on the side elevation, there is no additional built form to the side of the host dwelling, which means that the side amenity space which has been noted as of importance, would remain free of built form

and the openness surrounding the junction would be retained. In addition, the proposal would not advance built form further forward of the building line of Ash Street. In that regard, even if drawing no G02 had been certified as permitted development, I do not find that the proposal would result in the same impacts as the appeal proposal before me, where the main issue lies with the fact that the proposed two-storey side extension would, by reason of its scale, siting and prominent position, break the building line resulting in loss of openness of the junction with Ash Street and subsequently detracting from the visual appearance of the street scene.

15. The proposal would be contrary to Sheffield Unitary Development Plan 1998 Policy H14, which requires that extensions be well designed and would be in scale and character with neighbouring buildings and would not cause serious loss of existing garden space which would harm the character of the neighbourhood. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance contained within the Designing House Extension Supplementary Planning Guidance document which requires that extensions should be compatible with the character and built form of the area and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, paragraph 130 which seeks to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to the local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 130 d) of The Framework also seeks to establish or maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangements of streets to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live.

Other Matters

16. I note that the appellant has stated that they provided a copy of their proposals to the Council for comments prior to submitting the application and that the Council's response was that an application should be submitted. This is, however, outside the scope of this appeal, which has been determined on its own merits.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR