



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by L Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T4210/D/23/3319989

509 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Bury M25 3DE

- 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 Jess Blakesley against the decision of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 69055, dated 7 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension and two storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling situated on an elevated plot in a predominantly residential area. It is proposed to erect a two-storey front extension that projects approximately 3m to the front of the host dwelling, and a single storey extension that projects approximately 2.5m to the side.
4. Whilst Bury Old Road is a long road comprised of varying types and styles of buildings and dwellings, the appeal property is located at the end of a distinct small crescent of semi-detached dwellings, set back from the road and elevated from the highway. The dwellings have not remained uniform in design, with changes to fenestration and doors and in some cases the addition of porches. However, when viewed from the street, the dwellings are similar in size and style and give a pleasing harmonious impression of cohesiveness and symmetry. No other properties in the crescent have a similar front extension to that which is being proposed. Despite the proposed extension being designed to match the host dwelling in terms of design and materials, due to its size and projection, the proposed front extension would look unbalanced and would be an incongruous addition to the street scene. This would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the area.
5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 6 - Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties 2020 (SPD) states that in order to protect the character of the street scene, in general there will be a presumption against large extensions at the front of properties, and that extensions will not be

permitted if they project excessively from the original front wall. Whilst recognising that the SPD is guidance, and also the appellant's point that there is no definition as to what 'project excessively' means, I consider that the scale and massing of the 3m front extension would be disproportionate, over dominant and out of character when compared to the host dwelling and neighbouring properties.

6. When visiting the site and surrounding area I noticed other extensions to the front of dwellings. However, these extensions were of a smaller scale than that proposed and had limited impact on the character and appearance of the area. Additionally, the appellant has drawn my attention to properties in the surrounding streets that have had front extensions. However, I am not aware of the exact circumstances or the policy backgrounds that led to these extensions being built. I can also not be certain of their precise size and scale in relation to their host property, and their relationship to other properties in the street scene. I have determined this appeal on its individual planning merits and under the current policy context, and the examples of other extensions in the locality do not lead me to find that the proposal would be acceptable.
7. I noted from my site visit that the site is well screened by trees, which would minimise the impact of the proposed development. However, the trees have no statutory protection, and as such there is no certainty that they will be retained. As such, the current screening is not a determining factor when considering the permanent impact that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to saved policy H2/3 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997) and guidance in the SPD, which seek to ensure that extensions are of a high standard, not visually intrusive, and that they protect the character of the area.

Other Matters

9. I agree with the Council that the proposed side extension is acceptable in terms of its location and projection, as well as its design and scale. However, this is not severable from the proposed front extension and so I have considered the proposal as a whole and determined the appeal on this basis.
10. I note that the appellant has stressed a willingness to amend the proposal. However, it is not the role of the appeal process to suggest or consider amendments and I have determined the appeal on the proposal that was submitted.
11. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This concept has three dimensions which are mutually dependant – economic, social and environmental. I agree with the appellant that the proposed extension would bring small social and economic benefits. However, good design is an important aspect of sustainable development. Considering the three dimensions of sustainable development together the economic and social benefits would not outweigh the environmental harm. Therefore, the proposal would not represent sustainable development.

12. I have had regard to the desire of the appellant to stay in the area, and to extend the property in order to start a family. However, I am minded that the harm identified would be permanent, and it is not outweighed by the appellants' personal circumstances.

Conclusion

13. I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no reasons to indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

INSPECTOR