



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/D/23/3330887

116 Birch Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham, OL1 2QU

- 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 Josh Ainsley against the decision of Oldham Council.
 - The application Ref HOU/351033/23, dated 22 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as a 'Two storey side and rear extension to existing dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision refers to a 'two storey side and rear extension (Revision of application HOU/350679/23)' and as this reflects the planning context more accurately, I have used it as the basis for my determination of the appeal.
3. I have noted that the Council has not objected to the single storey rear extension which it says has already been built and was approved under HOU/350679/23. I have therefore considered only the proposed two storey side extension under this appeal.
4. The appellant has submitted an amended plan with this appeal (ref (02)003 Rev B) which proposes white render at first floor level only rather than at both ground and first floor levels as proposed originally, new roofing materials of grey roof tiles rather than the red clay tiles proposed originally, an exposed brickwork feature in the gable and dark grey, fascias, soffits and windows to match those of the existing house. As those are minor changes that would not prejudice the interests of interested parties, I have considered the appeal on the basis of the amended plan.

Reasons

5. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area. The development plan includes policies 9 and 20 of the Oldham Local Development Framework Development Plan Document – Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2011) (DPD) which together seek to ensure that development is of a high quality and does not have a significant adverse effect on the visual amenity of the area. The National Planning Policy Framework has a similar objective.

6. Birch Avenue is a street of predominantly semi-detached houses built during the inter-war period. The attractiveness of the street and the area lies in the strong consistency within each design type. All were built on a similar building line with main hipped roofs, red brick walls, red clay roof tiles and tile hanging on the bays. Many of the dwellings have been altered and some have been extended to the side but those extensions are generally in keeping with the style of the dwellings. Those where the form, details and materials of the pair match and their symmetry is retained are the most successful in enhancing the character and appearance of the area.
7. No 116 is a semi-detached house with round bay windows. Its adjoining neighbour at no 114 has been successfully extended to the side with a two storey extension with a subsidiary lower hipped roof and matching red brick and red clay tiles. Planning permission was granted earlier this year under HOU/350679/23 for a two storey side and rear extension at the appeal dwelling. The current proposal differs from that mainly in regards to the proposed external materials and the addition of a gable on the front elevation of the proposed hipped roof.
8. I saw no other examples of white render on the front elevation walls of dwellings in the street. The proposed introduction of white rendered walls, even if only at first floor level, would be at odds with the other half of the pair and with the strongly consistent use of red brick for the whole of front elevations elsewhere in the street. It would have a stark appearance and would draw attention to the appeal dwelling in a street where other dwellings sit harmoniously with one another.
9. The proposed gable, although a subsidiary feature, would contrast with its neighbour and with the other roofs of semi-detached houses in the street, none of which display such a feature. It would be uncharacteristic of this particular style of house and would have an unbalancing effect on the pair. I noted at my visit that the one bungalow in the street, a few properties further down from the appeal site, has a gabled roof on its front elevation but that is an exception to the predominant style of roof and in any case is seen at the end of the row of semi-detached houses and at the end of the street. It has a different context from the appeal site which lies in the middle of the row of semi-detached houses and does not provide justification for this proposal.
10. I have noted that the proposed scheme would provide additional accommodation for the appellant and his family including a ground floor wc and improved accessibility for people with mobility issues but I am not persuaded that those objectives could not be achieved through a more appropriate scheme and those matters do not outweigh the harm that would be caused.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal, by reason of its materials and roof form, would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to DPD policies 9 and 20 above and to the Framework. As such it would be contrary to the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector