



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2024

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P4415/D/23/3331417
47 Hallam Road, ROTHERHAM, S60 3ED

- 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 Mrs Ashraf against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RB2023/0524, dated 2 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey rear extension and a two-storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council, on the decision notice, has referred to the proposed development as including a two-storey side/rear extension and I consider this to be an accurate representation. In the officer's report, it is also referred to as including a two-storey front extension. I will deal with the issue in the main body of this decision letter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed two-storey side extension on the character and appearance of Hallam Road.

Reasons

4. No 47 is a semi-detached house situated on the eastern side of Hallam Road. The main body of the house has a large front bay with a set-back element to the side which has a half-hipped roof that extends down at the front, such that the front elevation of this element appears as between ground- and first-floor levels. This feature is repeated on a number of detached and semi-detached houses along this part of the road. There is a garage to the side of the house, set behind the front elevation of the house. The proposed development would entail the demolition of the garage and the construction of a two-storey side elevation extending forwards of the current garage position to a point level with the front of the existing bay. It would also extend beyond the existing rear elevation of the house and would link with a single-storey extension across the rear of the house.

5. Policy CS28 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) indicates that development proposals should be responsive to their context and be visually attractive. Policy SP55 of the Council's Sites and Policies Document (SP) indicates that all forms of development are required to be of high quality, and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area. Regard should be had to the setting of the site and grain of surrounding development; the use of appropriate materials; and that proposals reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and create a positive sense of place.
6. The Council's Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) includes guidance on house extensions. In general, an extension should not make a house look unbalanced and incongruous, particularly if neighbouring houses are similar in design and regularly set out. In addition, a two-storey side extension should appear subservient to the main body of the house and should not unbalance a pair of semi-detached properties.
7. The Council contends that the proposed two-storey side extension, by virtue of its size, design and location does not represent a subservient addition to the original property. The design and massing of the extension is out of character with the host property and would dominate the front elevation and unbalance the pair of semi-detached properties. It would be clearly visible and prominent within the street scene and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and its adjoining neighbour. It would, on this basis, be materially detrimental to the street scene and locality.
8. The appellant contends that the scheme would conform to the requirements of the SPD, and that the proposal would represent an enhancement, both visually and architecturally, on the current dwelling. The street scene comprises a variety of house types and designs, and there are a number of houses along the road that have been extended in a similar way. Finally, the design of the proposed development would transform the dwelling into a more attractive building of better energy efficiency that would enhance the street scene and contribute in a positive way to the townscape and local character.
9. The Council has raised no objections to the rear elements of the proposed development, and I concur with this perspective. However, the front part of the side extension would project significantly further forward than the existing garage and also further forward than the secondary element of the main house frontage to which it would be connected. It would have a front bay with hipped roof to match that of the main bay, and would project to the same point as the front bay, but would be lower than the main roof ridge. On the basis that it would project forward of part of the main house, I consider, in this case, that it could be categorised as a front extension as well as a side extension.
10. I acknowledge that the houses along Hallam Road are mixed in design and type. However, No 47 is one of a row of 8 semi-detached dwellings which are of identical design, apart from the garages, and there are also detached houses in the vicinity with a very similar appearance. In this context, the proposal would appear as incongruous in this setting, out of character with its immediate surroundings. I also acknowledge that there are a number of detached houses along this part of the road that appear to have been extended in a similar way to that of the proposal at No 47. However, these extensions have resulted in balanced, double-fronted detached houses, whereas the appeal proposal would result in a significantly unbalanced pair of semi-detached houses.

11. From my visit, it would appear that the only semi-detached house that has been significantly extended to the side is No 30. In this case, the side extension was apparently permitted some time before the current development plan and SPD were adopted, and it is set back from the main frontage of the house, so being less dominant as a feature than would be the case with the appeal proposal. In any case, I find this example has resulted in an unbalanced pair of houses that do not positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area, and should not be used as a precedent for this type of development.
12. I accept that the proposed side extension would be lower in height and a little narrower than the main bay of the house, but it would project out as far as the main front elevation and would be of sufficient scale that it would be a prominent feature in its own right, and would not appear subservient to the host property.

Other Matters

13. There have been objections from local residents regarding potential need for additional car parking generated by the proposal, along with the loss of a garage space. The Council has indicated that the space at the front of the extended dwelling would still be sufficient to meet the Council's parking standard, and I accept that, on this basis, the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on car parking in the area.
14. I note the appellant's comments about improved energy efficiency. However, I have nothing before me to suggest that there would be any improvements to the efficiency of the existing main house and, in any case, improved efficiency would be expected from any extension built to modern standards.

Conclusion

15. In conclusion, I find that the proposed side extension at the appeal property would not appear subservient to the main house. It would appear incongruous in its context and would result in an unbalanced pair of semi-detached houses within a row of similarly designed houses, to the detriment to the street scene along this part of the road. On this basis, it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Hallam Road and it would conflict with Policies CS28 of the CS and SP55 of the SP, along with guidance on house extensions in the SPD. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR