



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2024

by K Mansell BA (Hons) MPhil TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27.02.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B2355/D/23/3333647

11 Crawshaw Drive, Reeds Holme, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 8PR

- 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 Sue Foxcroft against the decision of Rossendale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2023/0334, dated 12 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed first floor side extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Situated on the incline of a gently sloping hillside, Crawshaw Drive is part of a small reasonably modern residential estate of mainly detached bungalows and two storey houses. They share a similar material palette and style, being built in either artificial stone or buff brick with dark window frames and slate/tile roofs. Whilst there is not a consistent building line, the properties are generally set back from the street behind a front garden or driveway, usually with low or open boundary treatments and established planting. The estate has a reasonably spacious character as a result.
4. The appeal property at 11 Crawshaw Drive is part of a small run of detached two-storey houses of a similar style. As a group, they frame the eastern edge of an area of open space, situated in a reasonably elevated position. There is a uniformity to their spacing and appearance, particularly to No 11 and the properties either side. Each has a single storey section to the north side of the house with a roof pitch that mirrors the main house, used either as a garage or living space. The appeal scheme would introduce a first-floor side extension above this.
5. The Council's 'Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties' Supplementary Planning Document (2008) (AERP SPD) provides guidance on two-storey/first floor side extensions. It states an intention to prevent the loss of gaps between buildings to avoid a terracing effect, especially where the gap contributes to local character. The present degree of separation between No 11 and its neighbours is reasonably consistent and narrow at ground floor level. However, the lack of built form above the single storey side portion of each house contributes to a sense of spaciousness

between them. This would be lost as a result of the appeal scheme and the development would appear cramped, to the detriment of the street scene.

6. Both parties have referred to an earlier appeal decision¹ at No 11 for a first-floor side extension, although I have not been provided with a copy. Nevertheless, I can ascertain that unlike the previous scheme, the extension before me would have a symmetrical roof. It would also be set in from the front and rear façade and set just below the existing ridge. However, the recess from the main front elevation would be modest at 500mm. Moreover, the ridge line would sit only just below that of the host dwelling. Given the somewhat staggered building line of the appeal property and its neighbours, the side extension would still be prominent from the street. The subsequent loss of the first-floor gap would contribute to a terracing effect between Nos 9 and 11. It would therefore appear as a discordant feature in the street scene, out of keeping with the established pattern and spacing of this group of dwellings. The use of matching materials and visual continuity of window openings would not overcome this harm.
7. The proposal would also extend the dropped kerb across the entire site frontage to facilitate three parking spaces. On my site visit, I saw that the area in front of the house is already mostly hard-surfaced and used for parking vehicles. However, where the kerb is still raised, a section of the front boundary to the appeal property is delineated by a low stone wall/planter with some shrub planting and a small tree. Whilst modest in scale, even with planting elsewhere within the estate, it still makes some contribution to greening the street and softening the immediate built environment. In the absence of a landscape plan to indicate the opportunity for any retained or replacement planting, its removal would detract from the street scene.
8. Furthermore, even if the driveway expansion was undertaken to adoptable standards, from the evidence before me, the requirement for three spaces stems directly from the increase in the number of bedrooms arising from the proposed extension. Even if it would minimise any potential for on-street parking, it would not be required otherwise. It would result in a fully open and hard surfaced frontage that would add to the visual harm arising from the appeal proposal.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal scheme would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies HS9 and ENV1 of the Rossendale Local Plan 2019-2036 (Adopted 2021). These policies require, amongst other matters, that extensions should consider the area's character and appearance, and safeguard and enhance the built environment. It would also be contrary to guidance in the Council's AERP SPD, which includes advice that extensions should not detract from the appearance of the street-scene or general character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, it would conflict with guidance at Section 12 of the Framework, which seeks generally to secure good design that contributes to the quality of the area.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge the matters raised by a third party, which includes a concern about the overshadowing impact of the proposed extension and a loss of light. The Council do not raise any issue about the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, either because of the neighbouring window

¹ APP/B2355/D/22/3302514

being to a non-habitable room or because of the position of the extension and the siting and orientation of the two properties. I do not disagree on this point. In any event, I am dismissing the appeal for the reasons given.

11. I recognise that the appeal scheme would provide some benefits to the appellant, including the provision of additional and improved living space to meet their longer-term needs, as well as seeking to make the most efficient use of the site. I am also mindful that the appellant has referred to an appeal decision² where the family's living needs in that case were afforded significant weight. I have not, however, been provided with a copy of that decision. The appellant also acknowledges that those circumstances do not necessarily match their situation. Furthermore, planning decisions are taken in the public interest and based on the evidence before me, such personal circumstances in this case do not outweigh the substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Mansell

INSPECTOR

² APP/B2355/D/22/3310288