



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2024

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/D/24/3348836

4 Norford Way, Rochdale OL11 5QS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Sarwar against the decision of Rochdale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00197/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and rear extension, two-storey front gable extensions, front facade remodelling, rear dormer extension, insertion of 10no rooflights, addition of render to all elevations, alteration to fenestration and extension of driveway following demolition of existing attached outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice as it is a more accurate description of the development before me than the one provided on the planning application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed extensions on: i) the character and appearance of the host dwelling; ii) the living conditions of the neighbours at No.6 Norford Way; and iii) flood risk.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. No.4 Norford Way (No.4) is a large, detached two-storey dwelling located on a roughly triangular plot on the eastern side of Norford Way, a long residential cul-de-sac. As existing, No.4 has a simple plan form, pitched roof with low eaves and three gabled dormer windows to the front roof slope, and four to the rear, all sited broadly centrally between the eaves and ridgeline of the host roof.
5. To one side, No.4 has a pair of relatively narrow facing gables which have full height multi-paned windows at ground floor providing two bays to the existing lounge. It is proposed to replace this existing pair of gables with a single gable of a similar width and depth, but increasing the height such that its ridge is offset just below the ridgeline of the original roof. The three existing gabled

dormer windows to the front elevation would be replaced with a second gable at one side accommodating an integral garage (replicating the one described above) and a lower, narrower centrally positioned gable accommodating the main entrance to the dwelling with a void above. The proposed gables would all incorporate large areas of glazing extending into the roof pitch and would significantly alter the appearance of the existing dwelling, all but consuming the existing roofslope and the front elevation.

6. No.4 is well offset from its northern boundary, save a part open sided garden store which broadly aligns with the principal rear elevation. It is proposed to demolish this store and construct a two-storey side extension which would project around 3.8m from the flank elevation, extending beyond the existing rear elevation to a depth of around 14.3m. The front part of the side extension has been designed such that it would continue the ridgeline of the main roof of No.4, but would have a much higher eaves level which would align with the eaves of the new gables. To the front elevation, the proposed side extension would accommodate a second entrance and staircase with full height (ground and first floor) vertical glazing. The proposed side extension would be set well back from the new projecting (garage) gable, but nonetheless, because of its high eaves, height and level of glazing would appear a prominent, somewhat incongruous addition to the host which I find would unbalance the architectural composition of the dwelling (even as remodelled).
7. In combination with the scale of the projecting gables (notably their height), the proposed side extension would unduly dominate the host dwelling. It would therefore clearly conflict with the general guidance in the Council's *Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (2016) (SPD)* that house extensions should be designed to be in keeping with the host property and generally should be subservient to it.
8. Where the proposed side extension projects beyond the existing rear elevation (as a two-storey outrigger), the ridgeline has been lowered by 1.8m and the Council consider the resulting proportionality appears subservient when viewed from the rear. I share this view.
9. The SPD guidance in respect of rear dormers is that they should be modest in size, not occupying a disproportionately large portion of the roof and should be set back from the eaves line, set in from side walls of the dwelling and should not exceed the height of the ridge. Further, it advises that dormers with flat roofs should be avoided unless they are considered to better respect the design of the host building and character of the area. The four existing gabled dormers on the rear roof slope would be replaced with a wide single, flat roof dormer and 10no. roof windows, which would enable additional bedrooms to be accommodated within the roofspace.
10. Consistent with the SPD guidance, the proposed dormer is set well below the ridgeline of its host and is proportionate in scale to the roof plane. However, because of its width (offset minimally from one side of the dwelling and the new outrigger) and its siting very low within the roof slope close to the eaves, it would appear an unsympathetic, contrived addition to its host. I note the comments of the appellant that the design and form of the rear elevation is screened from public view, but I observed on my site visit that, despite some landscape screening on the eastern boundary, the proposed dormer would be

clearly visible and unduly prominent when viewed from the footpath which runs along the northern boundary between No.4 and No.6 Norford Way.

11. Norford Way is particularly varied in terms of the size, design and style of dwellings and I noted examples of contemporary remodelling. I do not therefore disagree with the appellant that No.4 is unlike any other dwelling within the street and that it could accommodate change and extension. The appellant argues that the policies quoted (in the decision notice) are clearly aimed at protecting elements of the streetscene which contribute to a standard of residential and general amenity. They also, however, require that new development is well proportioned, is of high quality design and respects identity in terms of matters such as design, scale and siting. I observed on my site visit that the bend in Norford Way and existing landscaping on the frontage (which would be retained) would restrict views of No.4 when travelling along Norford Way from the south-east. However, from the north, and in close proximity, the proposed extensions would be particularly dominant in the streetscene and for the reasons I have already given would fail to appear sympathetic or proportionate to their host.
12. I therefore conclude on the first main issue that the proposed extensions would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Consequently, they would conflict with policies P3 and DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) (CS) and Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) which together require new development to adhere to high standards and quality of design, ensure all buildings contribute positively to townscape, respect character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size and scale, and have regard to the principles set out in the SPD. It would further fail to accord with the principles of good design set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Living conditions

13. The SPD sets out minimum space standards which it states will be applied to all new residential development and developments which affect existing residential properties. The minimum standard is 14m between a principal window and any directly facing two-storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.
14. The proposed two-storey side extension (and rear outrigger) would project around 14.3m alongside the northern boundary of No.4 and would be separated from its neighbour at No.6 Norford Way (No.6) by around 10m. The flank elevation of the proposed side extension would be blank, save two rooflights sited centrally within the roofplane. The appellant acknowledges that there are windows in the south facing elevation of No.6 (so directly facing No.4) but comments that a number of these appear to be secondary windows. I observed on my site visit, however, that on the south elevation of No.6, at ground floor, is a window to an open plan kitchen, dining area and at first floor a secondary window to a dual aspect bedroom, a window to an ensuite (obscure glazed) and the sole window to a bedroom. Consequently, there is a principal window on the southern elevation of No.6 and the proposals fall around 4m short of the minimum separation distance set out in the SPD.
15. Between No.4 and No.6 is a footpath which connects Norford Way and Springbank Lane and alongside this (within the boundary of No.4) is a large Leyland Cypress hedge. I observed that along the southern boundary of No.6 is

a closed boarded timber fence, but any landscaping within the garden does not extend much beyond the height of this fence. I acknowledge that the Leyland Cypress hedge, at its current height, would obscure much of the flank elevation of the proposed two-storey outrigger. However, whilst the hedge is shown as being retained (and to be maintained), I observed that it is located within a raised border with retaining wall which would abut the proposed side extension and outrigger. I also observed that the hedge had evidently recently been topped on the footpath side. I am not therefore persuaded that the hedge would remain in its current form and height such that it can be relied upon for screening.

16. The outlook from the sole window of a bedroom of No.6 could therefore be toward a long, blank elevation sited at relative close proximity. Despite the fact that the neighbours are separated by a footpath which is around 1.2m higher than the ground level of No.4, the proposed extension would appear oppressive from that window, to the detriment of the living conditions of the neighbours at No.6. The proposals would therefore conflict with CS policies DM1 and P3 which together require that all developments, including extensions and alterations, do not adversely affect the amenity of residents, through visual intrusion or overbearing impact, and have regard to the SPD guidelines. It would further conflict with paragraph 135 of the Framework which requires that decisions ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Flood Risk

17. No.4 has an existing block paved driveway which extends up to the back edge of the pavement of Norford Way, and to the front and side of the dwelling, retaining a generous front garden. It is proposed to extend the area of block paving to allow two additional car parking spaces to be accommodated parallel to the western boundary.
18. I note that the Council have raised concern that the submitted information does not depict any cross sectional plans showing how the paving could be laid and therefore the permeability and flood resilience measures cannot be determined. I am satisfied, however, that given the limited extent of additional block paving proposed, such detail would have been appropriately controlled by condition should the proposal have been found acceptable. I therefore conclude that there would be no conflict with CS Policy G8 in so far as it seeks to ensure new development does not lead to any form of increased flooding.

Conclusion

19. Notwithstanding my conclusion regarding flood risk, I have concluded that the proposed extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and to the living conditions of neighbours at No.6 Norford Way. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR