



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2012

by Richard Clegg BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 12 January 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/11/2166343

4 Branch Road, Mellor Brook, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 7NU

- 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 S Bennett against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2011/0725, dated 19 August 2011, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2011.
 - The development proposed is a rear first floor bedroom over the existing ground floor extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing building and this part of Mellor Brook.

Reasons

3. No 4 Branch Road is a detached house with an asymmetrical pitched roof: the rear roof plane is steeper than that at the front of the property and descends to lower eaves at ground floor level. There is a flat-roofed single-storey extension across the back of the house, and the proposal would involve the construction of a first floor extension above this structure, with the eaves of the new roof plane at first floor level.
4. The proposal would bring the eaves level at the rear of the house up to the same height as at the front. However, because of the distance from the ridge to the rear elevation, the new roof plane would have a markedly shallower pitch than that at the front, and the gable elevations would become much bulkier. The combination of these factors would result in an extension which would appear disproportionate and awkward in relation to the existing house. Construction of a pitched roof over the existing flat-roofed extension would help to an extent to visually incorporate that structure into the house. However, due to its materials and fenestration, the previous extension would still not be consistent with the appearance of the original dwelling. In any event, the limited benefit of the appeal proposal in this regard would be clearly outweighed by its damaging impact on the overall form of the house. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance – Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings (SPG) explains that any extension should, amongst other matters,

reflect the character of the original house, and respect its proportion and form. Because of the depth and roof profile of the extension, it would fail to comply with these provisions of the SPG.

5. The appellant has calculated that the proposal would increase the floorspace of the existing house by less than 25m², about 7.5%. Guidance in the SPG is that schemes which would increase the floor area of the *original* dwelling by more than 75% should be avoided, and the appellant's calculation, does not appear to have been prepared on this basis¹. In any event, the SPG does not indicate that schemes which would result in a cumulative addition of no more than 75% of floorspace are acceptable. The Guidance Note makes it clear that there should be a good visual relationship between the original dwelling and subsequent additions, and I have found that this would be not the case in respect of the proposed first floor extension.
6. Dwellings in the vicinity of the appeal site are not uniform in appearance. The proposal would not alter the front elevation of the house, nor would it extend further back than nearby dwellings, and both the eaves and ridge levels would remain lower than the adjacent properties. However, the bulky and awkward form of the side elevations would be clearly seen in the gaps to Nos 2 and 6. Trees at the front of No 2 and at the entrance to No 6 would only provide limited screening of the extended gables. Although more distant, the detrimental effect of the appeal proposal would also be apparent in views from the public footpath which crosses the field to the rear of the site. As a consequence of the proposal, the extended dwelling would detract from its surroundings, contrary to the objective of Policy H10 and to criterion (e) in Policy G1 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan. I conclude that the proposed development would be damaging to the character and appearance of the existing building and to this part of Mellor Brook.
7. Due to the existing form of the roof, headroom in the existing rear bedroom and the bathroom is restricted by sloping ceilings, and the extension would overcome this problem. I have also read that the appellant's wife suffers from sleep deprivation caused by traffic along Branch Road. The double glazing fitted in the front bedrooms has not proved to be a remedy, and a new bedroom at the back of the house is, therefore, sought to improve the situation. I note also that no objections have been raised by neighbours or the Parish Council. These considerations do not, however, outweigh the significant harm which the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the existing house and its surroundings. My overall conclusion, having regard to all matters raised, is that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Clegg

INSPECTOR

¹ The appellant also calculates that the combined volume of the existing and ground floor extensions is less than 75% of the original building. However the guidance on percentage increases in the SPG relates to floor areas.