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PDA GROUP

PRICE DINSDALE ASSOCIATES LTD

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

STATEMENT

To Accompany

PLANNING APPLICATION

EXTENSIONS TO DWELLING

At

26 HADDON ROAD, BUXTON SK17 7PP

August 2013

HIGH PEAK
26 SEP 2013
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROPOSED EXTENSIONS TO DWELLING

At

26 HADDON ROAD, BUXTON SK17 7PP

Supporting Statement

August 2013

Introduction

The proposal seeks Consent to refurbish and extend a small semi-detached dwelling to form a family home with reasonable levels of accommodation.

At the outset, it is important emotionally, if not technically relevant to the Planning process, to appreciate that this property has been in the uninterrupted and happy ownership of the Applicant's family since it was constructed, well over fifty years ago. That is the primary reason why the Applicants wish to extend this property, rather than sell and buy a larger house in a different location.

The Applicant currently serves with HM Armed Forces, spending a considerable amount of time out of the country. However, at the end of his contract, he wishes to return to live in the family home in Fairfield. He therefore wishes to extend at both ground and first floor levels, to enhance the accommodation to provide reasonable, though not over-generous, space for his family.

He also wishes to undertake re-modelling of the principal elevation of the property, to incorporate a new covered porch and to change the design of the principal windows.

Site

The property comprises half of a semi-detached pair of dwellings, in a street of similar properties in a long-established residential area of Buxton, and was constructed in the mid part of the last century.

The existing dwelling stands on an atypically deep plot, with generous rear garden space. However, the plot is narrow, and the internal accommodation is compromised by being substantially inferior in floor area to the majority of the dwellings on the same street, and in the immediate locality generally.

In common with many of the properties in the area built at this time, there was no specific provision for off-street vehicle parking, and so the original front garden and highway boundary wall have been removed to form a hardstanding area. Due to the narrowness of the plot, access alongside the building to a side or rear garage is not viable.

Many of the adjacent dwellings have acquired extensions of all types over the last three or four decades, including frontage remodelling, rear single and two storey extensions, conservatories, etc. The Applicant seeks Consent to undertake works similar to those already implemented elsewhere in the same street and locality.

Viewed from the street frontage, the property to the left of the Application site has had a large conservatory type structure added, which projects some four to five metres back from the rear elevation.

The Existing Dwelling

The existing dwelling comprises a two storey semi-detached property entirely typical of its era, built of red clay facing brick lower walls, with roughcast render external finish above. Floors and roof construction are traditional, with timber joists and rafters, and the roof covering is of small format red clay tiles. External joinery is general in white upvc. Dwellings immediately adjacent are constructed of matching materials.

Internally, the accommodation comprises at ground floor level, a small entrance hall, one large "through" living room, a small kitchen, and lean-to outhouse. At first floor, there is a minute landing area giving on to three very cramped bedrooms and a small bathroom.

The small bedroom and kitchen are not of adequate size for reasonable average family use.

The Proposed Alterations/ Extensions

The applicant wishes to extend the rear of the property, to the full width of the existing structure, at ground floor level, to produce a new kitchen/ dining area for family use.

He also wishes to build over part of the width of the proposed ground floor extension at first floor level, in order to replace the existing completely unviable third bedroom with a new double bedroom with en suite facilities.

He further wishes to remodel the highway frontage of the dwelling by replacing the principal windows with square bays, and including a reasonable sized porch area.

Pre-Application Consultation

A pre-Application Consultation was undertaken, and it was the opinion of the consulting Officer that the proposed works to the street frontage were entirely acceptable.

Some concern was expressed regarding the depth of the proposed rear two storey extension, in terms of the scale of the extension compared to the sale of the existing dwelling.

It appears from the report of the consulting Officer that the depth of the full-width ground floor extension is not a particularly contentious issue.

With regard to the two-storey element of the proposed rear extension, the Officer's report suggests that the scale of this may be "disproportionate". However, this term is unquantifiable and essentially subjective, and the Officer stated that the pre-Application advice was **not** based on a site visit, or on an assessment of the impact of the proposals on adjoining properties, both of which would have informed a more objective opinion.

Amenity

In densely developed residential areas, most development proposals will have some impact on neighbouring residents. The test for the acceptability of proposals is not whether the volume of an extension coincides with a subjective notion of what may or may not be "proportionate", but rather an assessment of whether the proposal compromises the amenity of adjoining residents and, if so, whether the extent of that compromise is acceptable, or excessive.

It has been recognised by the Development Control system for many years that it is extremely difficult to establish a generally accepted, objective assessment of what constitutes an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" compromise in the amenity enjoyed by residential properties adjoining a site where extensions to a dwelling are contemplated.

To a certain extent, this has been clarified by the generalisation that "there is a right to light, but not to a view".

Fortunately, this "right to light" has been quantified, many years ago, for the avoidance of doubt. It is of particular relevance in the context of extensions to one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, where, on the common boundary, the flank wall to an extension will inevitably affect the outlook from those windows on the same elevation in the neighbouring property.

In such a case, the "right to light" has long been defined as an inverted half cone of open air, with its apex on the mid-point of the cill of the neighbour's window, and projecting upwards and outwards from this point, at an angle of 45^0 horizontally and vertically. No part of a neighbour's extension should impinge upon that zone.

For the purposes of civil disputes, the more rigorous "50-50" principle is adopted, i.e. at a height of 850mm above floor level, more than 50% of the area of a room being assessed must receive at least 0.2% of the total illumination received from the sky.

Evaluation of Proposals – The "Right to Light"

Evaluation of the Applicants' proposals in this case proves that the right to light afforded to the neighbouring half of the semi-detached dwelling is **not** breached with reference to the "45^0 rule", as no part of the proposed single or two storey extension impinges on the inverted cone of open air defined previously.

Likewise, evaluation of the Applicants' proposals in this case would prove that the right to light afforded to the neighbouring half of the semi-detached dwelling is **not** breached with reference to the "50-50 rule", as the relevant elevation is completely unobscured to the east and south, and will thus receive considerably more than the specified minimum percentage of sky illumination.

Evaluation of Proposals – Proportionality

In terms of the parameters quoted by the consulting Officer in her later clarification of the pre-Application Consultation, it was stated that the scale of an extension might be deemed to be "disproportionate" if its volume exceeded that of the original dwelling by more than 50%. In this instance, the volume of the extensions is almost exactly 50% of the volume of the original dwelling, and so a strong case cannot be sustained on the basis of "disproportionality".

The consulting Officer also stated that (albeit without undertaking a site visit or assessment of the effects of the proposals on adjoining residents), it was her view that the two storey extension should be no more than around 3.5m in length. This of course, takes no account of the demolition of the existing outhouse/ scullery, which already extends over two metres to the rear. The proposed rear two storey extension projects only 3.2m beyond the rearmost part of the existing building.

Evaluation of Proposals – Visual Amenity

Only two premises are in any way affected by the proposals. These are, respectively, the other half of the semi-detached property owned by the Applicants, and the southern half of the pair of semi-detached dwellings adjoining the Applicants' property to the immediate north.

Considering firstly the other half of the semi-detached dwelling that is the subject of this Application. The outlook straight ahead (east) from the neighbour's living room and rear bedroom windows remains, of course, unaffected by development. However, the majority of the neighbour's rear garden, and the source of strongest day/ sunlight, is from the south. This aspect and outlook remains completely unaffected by the proposed development. The only loss in visual amenity to this property is the cut off of the aspect to the north-east, which is of little quality, is not within the daily track of the sun, and from whence comes the worst of the area's winter weather. It cannot therefore logically be argued that there is significant loss of visual amenity to this property.

Considering the southern half of the pair of semi-detached dwellings immediately to the north of the Application site. This dwelling has a large, single storey rear extension already in place.

The relevant feature of note here is that the rear elevation of this property does not line through with adjacent properties, being approximately 2m further to the east that the rear elevation of the Applicants' dwelling.

As no site visit, or on-site assessment of amenity were undertaken as part of the pre-Application consultation, it may be assumed that the opinion of the consulting Officer that the rear two storey extension should be limited in depth to around 3.5m was a generalised view. It will be noted from the submitted drawings that the proposed two storey extension does not, in fact extend more than 3.5m east of the rear elevation of the neighbouring dwelling, which must surely be the relevant dimension to consider when assessing any impact on the amenity of this particular dwelling. In terms of overall projection of the extensions of both properties, the existing extension to the adjoining northern dwelling extends further to the east that that currently proposed by the Applicants.

There will, of course, be a marginal loss of light to the neighbour's extension resulting from the proposed development (although not to the rear elevation of the original dwelling). However, it would be difficult to sustain a judgement that the Applicant be denied Consent to build an extension that extended to the east less than does an existing and immediately adjacent extension.

Conclusion

- The Applicants' wish to improve and extend this property, rather than purchase an alternative larger dwelling, are genuine and entirely understandable.
- The scale of the existing accommodation is not appropriate for the average contemporary family unit, although the overall plot is generously sized.
- There is no Planning objection to the remodelling of the street frontage.
- There is no substantial Planning objection to the size of the single storey rear extension.
- The initial perception of the impact of the two storey extension as proposed does not withstand analytical scrutiny in terms of proportionality, concern over visual amenity, or adequate daylighting.
- The adjacent dwelling to the immediate north, and which shares a common boundary with the Applicants' property, already possesses an extension that projects further to the east that does the Applicants' proposal.

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