
2021/0806

Applicant: Mr Keith Blackburn

Description: Conversion of existing basement to form 1no one bedroom bed flat and reduction in width and height of existing boundary wall to rear to allow for additional car parking

Site Address: 35 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley, S75 1DN

Site Location and Description

The application relates to part of the basement level of an extended, stone built detached building. The building was built in 1872 as a large family home with bedrooms on the first floor, living accommodation on the ground floor and servant accommodation/utility rooms within the basement. The building underwent significant rear extensions in the 1930's which resulted in the subdivision of some existing rooms and the creation of a separate 3 bedroom semi detached dwelling known as 35a Huddersfield Road. In the 1970's number 35 was subdivided into 2no. flats, 1no. at first floor and 1no. at ground floor. The basement was used for additional storage for the ground floor flat.

To the front of the property is an enclosed buffer garden and to the rear is an enclosed yard which mainly consists of hardstanding and has vehicular access onto Cockerham Lane. The area is predominantly used for parking.

The site is located within a predominantly residential area with neighbouring dwellings to all sides. The site also sits within the Huddersfield Road Conservation Area.



Planning History

2020\ENQ\00723 – conversion of basement into 1 bed flat;

It appears that 35 Huddersfield Road already contains 2 no. flats on the ground and first floors. The internal floor area generally accords with the space standards for a one-bedroom flat set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide. However, there are concerns over the proposal. The bedroom is to be located towards the elevation fronting Huddersfield Road, but below ground level, and would be served by a small side window would sit within a relatively narrow space, with the glazing being situated below the adjacent ground level. The outlook from this window would be directly onto a blank gable wall at the adjacent dwelling. Although the bedroom and living room/kitchen could be switched, it still results in one of the main habitable rooms not having sufficient natural light and outlook.

In addition to the lack of daylight within the property there would also be poor levels of outlook, with the living room/kitchen, where the occupants would likely spend the majority of their time, having limited levels of outlook being onto a hard-surfaced parking area and boundary wall. Furthermore, no private amenity space is provided for the proposed flat. As such, it is considered that the flat would fail to provide what could reasonably be described as a good standard of amenity and would fall below an acceptable standard of amenity for future occupants.

As a result of the comments above the levels of residential amenity for future occupants would be substandard, therefore, the proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policies GD1 & D1 as well as SPD 'Design of Housing Development'. As such, the proposal is considered unacceptable.

Proposed Development

The applicant seeks permission to convert part of the basement into a 1-bedroom flat. The bedroom would sit to the front of the building below ground level and would have an en-suite bathroom. The open plan living/dining/kitchen area would sit to the rear of the property with direct access to the rear yard area. The bedroom would be served by 2no. side facing windows and the living area would be served by a door and window in place of the existing garage door. An enclosed area of private amenity space is proposed within the rear yard area.

The applicant also proposes to reduce the existing rear stone wall to 1m in height and widen the access to improve visibility at the vehicular access/egress point onto Cockerham Lane.

The existing area around the cellar stairs would remain for use as storage and access to the parking area by the ground floor flat.



Policy Context

The site is allocated as Urban Fabric within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and therefore the following policies are relevant:

Policy T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel

Policy T4 New development and Transport Safety

Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy LG2 The Location of Growth

Policy GD1 General Development

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making.

Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Policy H6 Housing Mix and Efficient use of land

Policy H9 Protection of Existing Larger Dwellings

Policy HE1 The Historic Environment

SPD's

Those of relevance to this application are as follows:

- Design of Housing Development
- Parking

Other

South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide

NPPF

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs of particular relevance to this application include:

Para 7 - The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Para 11 – Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Para 91 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

Para 109 - Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Para 124 - The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Consultations

Highways – No comments

Conservation Officer – concerns over the impact on the Conservation Area due to the alterations to the stone boundary wall.

Ward Councillors – no comments

Representations

Consultation letters were sent to 8no. neighbouring properties, a site notice was erected on Cockerham Lane and a press notice was placed in the Barnsley Chronicle. One letter of objection has been received. The main points of concern are;

- Reduced privacy
- Security concerns
- Impact on access and highway safety

Assessment

Principle of development

Local Plan policy H9 'Protection of Existing Larger Dwellings' states the loss of existing larger dwellings will be resisted. SPD 'Design of Housing Development' states that larger dwellings are those that have four or five bedrooms or are capable of accommodating four or five bedrooms without significant adaption.

It is acknowledged that the property has been subdivided, however, it was previously a large family home and could be converted back to such without significant alteration, as such, policy H9 applies.

SPD 'Design of Housing Development' states that the conversion of buildings to flats can be acceptable in some circumstances subject to meeting the relevant criteria set out in section 26.1 of the SPD.

All new dwellings proposed must ensure that living conditions and overall standards of residential amenity are provided or maintained to an acceptable level both for new residents and those existing, particularly in respect of the levels of mutual privacy. In addition, development will only be granted where the development would maintain visual amenity and not create traffic problems or prejudice the possible future development of a larger area of land.

It should also be noted that the Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA) finds no existing households planning to move nor newly forming households planning to form in the next 5 years expressed an aspiration or expectation to move to a studio/bedsit flat/apartment.

Residential Amenity

The floor area of the flat measures 43m² which falls short of the required 46m² for a 1 bed, 1 person flat and the 47m² for a 1 bed, 2 person flat, as set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide. The open plan living/dining/kitchen area also falls short of the required 24m² for a 1 bed flat, coming in at 20m².

The proposed bedroom would be to the front of the property and be partially below ground level. The applicant proposes 2no. windows to serve that room, however, given the ground levels, the windows would be on the side elevation. The windows would be in close proximity to the boundary wall separating the site from the neighbouring property and the gable wall of the neighbouring property. The windows would also be on the Northern elevation. As such, the occupants of that room would have poor levels of light and outlook, to the detriment of residential amenity and contrary to Local Plan Policy GD1.

The living area would have East facing single aspect windows. Those windows would face the small 11m² amenity space proposed for the flat, again the occupants would suffer poor levels of light and outlook.

As outlined above, the proposed amenity space for the flat would be 11m². SPD 'Design of Housing Development' states that flats should have 10m² of private amenity space, but this should also be paired with 50m² of shared amenity space for use with the residents of the other flats. There is no other amenity space within the curtilage of the building, contrary to the SPD. In addition, the amenity space proposed would be immediately adjacent to the parking spaces and would be overlooked by neighbouring properties, as such, would not be overly private.

Visual Amenity

The side elevation openings serving the proposed bedroom already exist and the door and window serving the living spaces would utilise an existing opening, as such, visual amenity would be maintained to a reasonable degree.

However, the site sits within the Huddersfield Road Conservation area. The existing rear stone wall adds to the character of the conservation area and reflects the stone rear boundaries at the neighbouring properties. The reduction in height of that wall and the increase in width would have a negative impact on the visual amenity of the conservation area and streetscene, resulting in harm to the character, contrary to Local Plan Policies D1 and HE1.

Furthermore, by increasing the visibility from Cockerham Lane into the site, the proposed boundary treatment around the private amenity space, plus the parking area, would be more visible and further detrimental to the Conservation Area and streetscene.

It is noted that similar walls and boundary treatments have been amended within the immediate, however, the cumulative affect of these amendments are eroding the character of the Conservation Area, the proposed amendments would further consolidate that erosion.

Highways Safety

The applicant has stated that the boundary wall would be reduced in height and the existing vehicular access widened to improve visibility, however, there is a lack of information regarding the parking layout and whether the space could accommodate parking for the 2no. existing flats, plus the proposed flat. In addition, no turning or manoeuvring facilities have been provided on the plans, as such, there is a lack of information in order to assess the application fully from a highway safety perspective.

Recommendation: Refuse for the following reasons;

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed change of use and further sub division of the property is contrary to the aims of Local Plan Policy H9 and SPD 'Design of Housing Development' which seeks the retention of family homes, as the application property has previously been a larger home and could be again without significant adaption.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed flat, given the sub standard size of the internal living spaces and external amenity areas, and the poor levels of outlook and light from habitable rooms, the future residents would be subject to an inadequate standard of residential amenity. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Local Plan policies GD1 'General Development', D1 'High Quality Design and Place Making', the 'Supplementary Planning document 'Designing New Housing Development' and the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed alterations to the stone boundary wall and the parking/amenity areas would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the streetscene and harmful to the character of the Conservation Area, contrary to Local Plan Policies D1 'Design' and HE1 'The Historic Environment'.

The applicant has not submitted sufficient details, such as parking layouts and turning/manoeuvring facilities, to enable an adequate assessment to be made of the effect of the proposal on highway safety.