

DESIGN STATEMENT

Single Storey Rear/Side Extension First Floor Front Extension 3 Bridgefield Drive, Bury BL9 7PE

Number 3 Bridgefield Drive is a large, detached house within a development of individually designed dwellings dating from around 1970. Although the houses are all different they share design details including red brickwork and rendered panels within timber framing.

Planning permission (number 54939) was granted in April 2012 for a conservatory across the rear of the house. It is now proposed to extend this sideways and with a flat roof. It is not anticipated that there will be any obstacles to planning permission being given.

The second element is a first floor extension above the existing garage which projects in front of the house. The existing hipped roof would be removed and brickwork built up to the eaves level of the house. A rendered gable would face the road. A planning application (number 54349) was refused in September 2011. The application was resubmitted (number 65312) and withdrawn in March 2020.

The applicant is keen to go ahead with the development. He does not agree with the two reasons for refusal. The first reason alleges that “the design of the proposed extension on the front of this property is neither appropriate to, nor sympathetic with the existing structure, and would be seriously detrimental to the visual amenity of the area”. The second reason relates to the lack of an adequate bat assessment.

The first reason for refusal was allegedly justified by policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and a Supplementary Planning Document. The decision predates the issuing of the government’s National Planning Policy Framework.

The old UDP is still Bury’s development plan. Policy EN1/2 – Townscape and Built Design is a non specific policy stating that the “the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an adverse effect”.

UDP Policy H2/3 – Alterations and Extensions gives general guidance on the acceptability, or otherwise, of house extensions. The guidance is made more specific in SPD6: Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties.

Paragraph 4.4 of SPD6 deals with front extensions and porches. There may be “generally, a presumption against large extensions at the front of properties” but in this instance the extension should be acceptable as explained below.

There SPD lists six issues to be considered:

- *Proposals should reflect the design and proportion of original dwelling.* The extension is in proportion with the house.
- *Proposals should respect original architectural features such as bay windows and match the existing finishing materials.* The extension is designed to match the existing house, using the same materials.
- *Pitched roofs will be required where appropriate.* A pitched roof is specified. A hipped roof, rather than a gable, would reduce the bulk of the extension but would not match the design of the house.
- *Extensions will not be permitted if they project excessively from the original front wall.* The SPD contains guidance on extensions. It is not a rule book. In this instance the “original front wall” is that of the garage which is set back over 3.4 metres from the road. Every house on the development is different and there is no “building line” as such. Other houses on Bridgefield Drive are at least as close to the road as the proposed extension e.g. Numbers 19 and 20. Many houses have large extensions.
- *Extensions will not be permitted if they interfere with the proper parking and access arrangements at the property.* There will be no interference.
- *Consideration of prevalence of street design.* The variety of surrounding house types will ensure that the extension is not unduly obtrusive and certainly not “seriously detrimental to the visual amenities of the area”. Photographs are submitted showing number 3 Bridgefield Drive and similar properties nearby to confirm this.

The National Planning Policy Framework was issued in revised form in July 2021 with a greater emphasis on good design. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way (para 38). It continues to stress that applications for sustainable development “should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material conditions indicate otherwise” (para 47). “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions” (para 55).

In years gone by Bury MBC asked for a bat assessment where the roof of a house was being altered but none have been requested for more recent applications that I have submitted. An assessment will be provided if it is considered essential.

Neither the single storey extension nor the first floor extensions will affect the residential amenities of neighbours.

Refusal of the first floor front extension could be understood if it was proposed for a bog standard house in a row of similar properties. The ground floor is already built as part of the original house. The new first floor will not stand out as an extension and will certainly not be “seriously detrimental to the visual amenities of the area”.