
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2016

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/D/16/3155819
12, Bleasdale Close, Aughton L39 6RU

- 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 Mrs Kate Lewis against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 2016/0631/FUL, dated 2 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey extension to either side of the existing detached dwelling with a single storey extension to the rear.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey extension to either side of the existing detached dwelling with a single storey extension to the rear at 12, Bleasdale Close, Aughton L39 6RU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 2016/0631/FUL, dated 2 June 2016, subject to the conditions listed in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Policy GN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan Development Plan Document 2013 (WLLP) sets out a number of criteria for sustainable development. Amongst these are a requirement for a high standard of design that respects its context, and, in the case of extensions, relates to the existing building in terms of design and materials, and does not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. More detailed guidance on good practice in design is set out in the West Lancashire Supplementary Planning Document: Design Guide, 2008 (SPD) which has to be read alongside Policy GN3.
 4. The appeal building is a detached, two storey house, located on a residential estate. The estate contains a limited range of house types, with a small cluster of individually designed houses at the corner of Sefton Gardens and Bleasdale Close. Although many of the houses have been subsequently altered or extended, the small range of house types, and the manner in which they are grouped in Sefton Gardens, results in a relatively homogenous appearance.
-

5. Bleasdale Close has a less uniform appearance than Sefton Gardens due to the presence of a greater proportion of bungalows, some non-standard house types, and the disposition of the house types within the street. As a result of the variety of roof forms and house types within the street, there is not a strong ridgeline evident and the main ridges of the roofs run both parallel and perpendicular to the street.
6. The ridge height of the house at 10 Bleasdale Close is slightly higher than that of number 12, and number 8 has a ridgeline that runs parallel to the street. Although number 14 is the same house type as number 12, it is well separated from number 12 by a large side extension with a shallow pitched roof. Within this context, the slightly increased height of the ridge on the appeal building that would result from the proposed extensions would be less noticeable and as such would not appear as an incongruous feature in the street.
7. The side extensions to the house would be built over existing ground floor projections to each side. On the north side of the house, the existing ground floor extension is set back from the frontage of the house, which would result in the first floor extension also being set back from the front wall of the house. This is in line with the guidance in the SPD. On the south side, the first floor extension would be level with the main front wall. The gable width of the extension to the south side would also be the same width as that of the existing property. The SPD suggests that extensions, measured in length or width should generally not exceed two thirds of the corresponding dimension of the existing property. The proposed side extensions would comply with this in respect of the front and rear elevations, but not with regard to the gable elevations.
8. The pitch of the proposed new roofs would, however, match that of the main roof of the house and the extensions to each side would result in a relatively balanced façade. Although this would change the appearance of the building, it would not overwhelm its existing character which arises from the strong gable feature to the front of the house and which is mirrored in the projecting ground floor porch. This would still be evident following the extension. As a result of the different built forms of the house types on the estate, the gaps between the properties vary in size. Whilst the proposed first floor extensions to the appeal building would bring the gables of the upper floor closer to the properties on either side, the resultant gaps would not be inconsistent with the separation of houses elsewhere on the estate.
9. Due to the existing architectural diversity of the street, the alteration to the appearance of the front façade and roof of the appeal building would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the street.
10. The proposed development also includes a ground floor rear extension that would project approximately 3.3 metres from the rear wall of the house. This extension meets the guidance in the SPD in respect of rear extensions and I note that the Council have not raised any specific objections to this aspect of the proposal. From the evidence before me and from what I saw on my site visit, I have no reason to come to a different conclusion with regard to the proposed rear extension. Whilst the side extensions do not wholly follow the guidance in the SPD, the language of the SPD is not prescriptive, and within the context that the appeal building is set, the proposed extensions would not have the effects that the guidance seeks to avoid.

11. I therefore find that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Policy GN3 of the WLLP and the SPD, which seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design that has regard to its context, relates to the existing building and respects the existing pattern of development.

Other matters

12. The planning officers report expresses some concern in respect of the proposed extensions having an overbearing effect on the occupiers of number 10 Bleasdale Close, although this is not specifically cited in the reason for refusal. Whilst the proposal would result in development at first floor level being approximately 1.8 metres closer to number 10 than at present, the side elevation of number 10 only contains opaque glazed windows. A garage and walkway within the curtilage of number 10 separate this property from the shared boundary with the appeal building. For these reasons I do not consider that the proposed extension would have an excessively overbearing effect on the occupiers of number 10.
13. I note that the Council do not have any concerns in respect of loss of privacy or daylight and sunlight to the neighbouring properties, nor do they have concerns with regard to car parking provision. I also note that whilst there are two Oak trees just outside the curtilage of the appeal building, the Council do not consider that the development will affect these. From what I saw on my site visit, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion on these matters.

Conditions

14. I have had regard to the conditions that have been suggested by the Council. In order to provide certainty as to what has been granted planning permission I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings. In order to ensure that the proposed extensions are in keeping with the existing house and the surrounding area, it is also necessary to attach a condition requiring that the materials used in the construction of the extension match those of the existing building. In order to ensure that the Oak trees adjacent to the rear boundary of the site are protected during the construction period it is necessary to attach a condition requiring a Arboricultural Method Statement detailing protection measures and working methods to be adopted. As the protection measures and working practices would be required for the duration of the construction period, this condition must necessarily be pre-commencement.
15. I have noted that there is a slight inconsistency in the submitted drawings. Due to the different depths of proposed side extensions, with the extension on the north side being set back from the front elevation, the ridges of the new roofs would be staggered and would not form a continuous ridge as is indicated on the submitted plans. Whilst this did not alter my conclusions on the main issue, it is a practical matter which it is necessary to address. I have therefore attached an additional condition requiring the submission of a revised drawing and roof plan to reflect staggered ridge line. As this matter affects the ability to construct the development in accordance with the approved drawings, this condition must also be pre-commencement.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 01 (Existing Plans); 02 (Existing Elevations); 101 (Proposed Ground Floor and First Floor Plans); 102 (Proposed Elevations); and 104 (Site Plan) except in respect of the details of the ridge of the roof as shown on drawing number 102.
- 3) No development shall commence until a revised proposed elevations drawing and roof plan showing the stagger in the ridge line have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with this approved plan.
- 4) No operations shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved until a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees, in relation to fencing and ground protection, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and the protective fencing has been erected as required by the AMS. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the AMS.
- 5) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.