

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/16/3157522

18 Ledyard Close, Warrington WA5 9YX

- 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 Joseph Gibson against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/28071, dated 2 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a side two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note that the plans submitted with the application contain a discrepancy with regard to the forward building line of the extension. The proposed elevations suggest that it would be flush with the existing side element. However, the floor plan suggests that it would be slightly set back. Based on the observations I made during my site visit, I consider that the floor plan is the more accurate representation of what is proposed. Accordingly, I have determined the proposal on this basis.

Preliminary Matters

3. At the time of my site visit the development had already commenced, albeit it had not been completed in full accordance with the submitted plans.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey dwelling situated on a cul-de-sac that comprises a total of approximately five similar properties. The properties are set back off the road and have open frontages, overall creating a spacious character to the area.
 6. The properties on the Close all have single-storey/one-and-a-half-storey side elements. These elements have a lower ridge line and are not as wide as the main, two-storey part of the dwelling, and as a result they appear visually
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subservient. The appellant confirms that these elements are part of the original dwellings and were constructed to provide a commercial element to the properties. Based on the evidence before me and from what I observed on site I find no reason to disagree with this. These units appear to have since been converted into garages and/or living accommodation. The existing side element on the appeal property comprises living accommodation on both the ground floor and first floor.

7. The extension would be slightly narrower in width than the existing one-and-a-half-storey side element and would be set back from its front and rear elevations. However, the cumulative width of the existing side element and the proposed extension would be significantly wider than the existing two-storey element. As a result, the totality of the one-and-a-half-storey component would dominate the two-storey element and would fail to appear visually subservient to the main part of the existing dwelling.
8. Furthermore, it would fail to respect the existing proportions of the properties on the street, whereby the two-storey element is clearly the dominant component of the building.
9. I have had regard to the appellant's contention that the existing side element is part of the original dwelling and therefore the extension accords with the Warrington UDP – Supplementary Planning Guidance – Side Extensions (SPG) 2003 in respect of not being more than 50% wider than the original dwelling. However, it would accommodate more than half the space between the side of the dwelling and the boundary, and therefore would fail to comply with the guidance with regard to corner plots. Although the existing boundary wall is high, due to differences in land levels, the reduced width between the dwelling and the boundary would nevertheless appear dominant from within the Close and would unacceptably erode the spaciousness of the area.
10. Notwithstanding the above, I am mindful that the SPG is guidance only and I do not attribute it as much weight as development plan policies. Policy QE7 of the Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) 2014, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure that development is designed to reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance the character, appearance and function of the street scene; and, harmonise with the scale and proportions of adjacent and existing buildings. Whilst the existing side element may form part of the original dwelling, it nevertheless appears subservient to the main two-storey element. Therefore, whilst it may satisfy some of the advice set out in the SPG, it would nevertheless fail to harmonise with the scale and proportions of the existing dwelling and others on the Close and as a result would fail to enhance the character and appearance of the street scene.
11. I find therefore, that the extension would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, contrary to Policy QE7 of the CS and the SPG. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Alexander Walker INSPECTOR