

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: 6th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/16/3159486

8 Coopers Place, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 6NN

- 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 Damian Jones against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/28383, dated 24 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a proposed two storey side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - ii) the effect of the development on highway safety, with particular regard to parking provision.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Coopers Place is a modern residential development predominantly comprising three terrace rows of three-storey town houses. The area is characterised by the three-storey height and narrow width of the properties that provides a vertical emphasis. In addition, the terraces either side of the road are set back from the highway and have open frontages that create a spacious character to the area.
 4. The appeal property is an end-terrace. The front door is on the gable end of the terrace row and faces one of the communal car parks. The extension would project off the gable end, extending the full width of the space between the existing gable and the boundary fence with the car park. The extension would be set back from the main elevation of the terrace row and the ridge height would be below that of the existing dwelling. However, its north elevation would be wider than the existing dwelling. As a result, it would appear squat and incongruous and would fail to respect the vertical emphasis of the existing property and the terrace row as a whole.
-

5. I note that the extension would not be readily visible along much of the road. However, it would be prominent when viewed from the adjacent car park, which is used by occupants of neighbouring properties. Therefore, its incongruity would detract from the character and appearance of the overall area.
6. 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 Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) 2014, which, 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. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. In their reasons for refusal, the Council state that it would also be contrary to the guidance set out in the Warrington UDP – Supplementary Planning Guidance – Side Extensions (SPG) 2003. However, based on the evidence before, I see no reason why the proposal would fail to accord with this guidance. Nevertheless, the SPG pre-dates the Framework and the CS, and it is only guidance. Therefore, I attribute greater weight to Policy QE7, and therefore the proposals compliance with the SPG does not outweigh the harm I have identified above.

Highway Safety

8. The majority of properties on the street have their own parking spaces to the front. Other properties, including the appeal property, have designated parking spaces in communal car parks situated either side of the terrace row at the head of the road.
9. The proposal would result in the dwelling having four bedrooms. The Warrington Borough Council Standards for Parking in New Development (SPD) 2015 states that dwellings with four or more bedrooms should be allocated a minimum of three parking spaces. The proposal includes an on-site parking space that measures 2.4m x 4.8m. However, the SPD states that the minimum dimensions of a parking space should be 2.5m x 5m. Therefore, based on the details submitted, the proposal would not provide adequate parking provision in accordance with the SPD. This would likely result in an increase in on street parking that, due to the limited availability of such parking, would pose an unacceptable risk to vehicle and pedestrian safety.
10. Notwithstanding the above, I am satisfied that there would be sufficient room within the site to accommodate a parking space that would measure 2.5m x 5m, particularly if the proposed space was reoriented by 90 degrees, as suggested by the appellant. Were I to allow the appeal, the provision of the required parking space could be achieved through an appropriately worded condition.
11. I find therefore that, based on the proposal before me, the development would result in significant harm to highway safety. As such, it would be contrary to Policies MP1 and QE6 of the CS, which, amongst other matters, take account of the impact of development on highway safety and ensure development adheres to car parking standards. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with the guidance set out in the SPD.

Conclusion

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

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR