



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2017

by V Lucas-Gosnold LLB MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/17/3180331

107 Vincent Close, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 8TB

- 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 & Mrs G Harris against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/30354, dated 5 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is to demolish the existing detached garage and construct a new 2 storey side extension to form a garage/store, utility, WC and 1st floor ensuite bedroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. No. 107 is a linked detached dwelling that is joined to the neighbouring dwelling via a garage/car port. It is situated at the head of a cul-de-sac. The other dwellings situated on the close differ in design. There is therefore some diversity in the streetscene, although the properties are similar in age and the majority are linked detached. Overall, these common elements create a visual cohesiveness in the built form along the close.
4. Due to the linked detached design, the majority of dwellings are separated from their neighbour by at least the width of a garage above ground floor level. This allows views in between the dwellings to open sky and trees beyond. The spaces between the properties therefore create a sense of openness and spaciousness. This complements the spacious layout of the estate in the form of the front gardens that do not have any formal boundary treatment along the edge of the highway. The character of the area is therefore defined by a mature housing estate with a spacious layout.
5. The development proposed would see the demolition of the existing garage and the construction of a new two storey side extension. It would project approximately 2.4m from the side elevation, it would be the same depth as the existing dwelling and would have a front dormer window.

6. The Council's 'House Extension Guidelines' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (Adopted 2003) seeks to ensure that side extensions are set back from the main front elevation as this helps to retain the look of the original property. To avoid a 'terracing effect' the SPG expects a 1m distance at first floor level to be retained between the side elevation of the extension and the boundary; and that the ridgeline of the roof of the extension should be lower than the original dwelling.
7. The plans submitted with the appeal documents show that a substantial setback would be incorporated at first floor level and that the roof ridge height of the proposal would be lower than that of the original dwelling. The proposal would therefore comply with the SPG in these respects. The proposal would not however be set in from the side boundary at first floor level and this element would conflict with the advice set out in the SPG.
8. As No. 107 is a linked detached property, the built form of the dwelling is already joined at ground floor level with that of No. 109. However, the space between the dwellings at first floor level is currently undeveloped and open. Being situated at the head of the Close, the appeal dwelling is visually prominent in views along the streetscene. The spaces in between the dwellings at first floor level are a defining feature of the pattern of development along the close and they make a positive contribution to the spacious character of the area as a consequence.
9. Whilst I appreciate the appellant's need to create space and that it may be difficult to achieve a design that is set in from the side boundary, the proposal to build up to the side boundary would result in the loss of space about the dwelling at first floor level in a visually prominent location resulting in a cramped, over-dominant form of development. I accept that Nos. 107 and 109 are not currently joined garage to gable and that the main form of the dwellings is separated by the width of both a garage and a car port. However, the additional space at first floor level, being in a visually prominent location in the streetscene, is a feature that positively enhances the spacious character of the area rather than it being seen as uncharacteristic. By extending the appeal dwelling up to the side boundary with No. 109, the proposal would reduce open sky views between Nos. 107 and 109 form of development that would be detrimental to the character of the area as a consequence. Whilst I have acknowledged that the design of the proposal does comply with some elements of the advice set out in the SPG, the lack of a set in from the side boundary would result in the proposal conflicting with the SPG overall.
10. Although not specifically referred to in the decision notice, the Council officer's report also identifies that the proposed steeply sloping roof of the extension along with the proposed insertion of a dormer window in the front roof slope would not reflect the built form of neighbouring dwellings. I am in agreement with this observation and this adds to my concerns.
11. I note the Council's views as to whether this proposal would create a precedent for similar developments to come forward. However, no specific information is before me, such as applications for similar proposals close to the appeal dwelling, to suggest this is a realistic possibility. I therefore attach limited weight to this consideration and have assessed the appeal proposal on its own merits.

12. I note that the appellant has referred generally to other developments being allowed in the area that have not incorporated a 1m set in from the side boundary. However, no specific reference to these other developments has been included in the submitted appeal documents. In any event, as set out in my main issue, above I have assessed the appeal scheme on the basis of its effect on the character and appearance of the area. The area on which I have based my assessment is formed by the immediate streetscene close to No. 107.
13. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with policies QE6 and QE7 of the Warrington Core Strategy (Adopted July 2014) which together seek to ensure that development will not lead to an adverse effect on the environment; and that proposals enhance the character of the local area. The proposal would also conflict overall with the SPG as set out in my Decision above. The proposal would also conflict with paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that planning secures high quality design.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

V Lucas

Inspector