



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2020

by Conor Rafferty LLB (Hons), AIEMA, Solicitor

Decision by Chris Preston BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M235/D/19/3242014

South View, Singleton Road, Weeton with Preese PR4 3PA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Adrian Chambers against the decision of Fylde Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0786, dated 28 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed rear extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a rear extension at South View, Singleton Road, Weeton with Preese PR4 3PA, in accordance with the terms of the application 19/0786 dated 28 September 2019 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan 'Planning Application Drawing Proposed Floor Plans Layout ID 1191 PL CHA C.2 Rev C' dated 27 September 2019.
 - 3) 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.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed extension would have an adverse effect on the availability of smaller properties in the rural area within which the appeal site is located.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located along the northern side of Singleton Road in Weeton with Preese, within an area defined as countryside by the Fylde Council Fylde Local Plan to 2032, adopted 22 October 2018 (the Local Plan). It comprises a semi-detached two storey residential property with gardens to the front and rear which benefits from previous extensions and alterations. While the wider area is characterised by

its rural nature with open fields, the appeal site forms part of a short row of detached and semi-detached dwellings.

5. The proposal relates to the erection of a rear extension at the appeal property, which by its nature and location would comprise development in the countryside. Policy GD4 of the Local Plan limits development in the countryside to, among other things, extensions to existing dwellings and other buildings in accordance with Policy H7. Policy H7(a), in turn, states that such extensions should increase the size of the property by no more than 33%, calculated in relation to the ground floor area of the original home.
6. No plans have been provided showing the original home, and the extent of previous extensions and additions was not immediately apparent from the site visit. While the Council have provided a planning history of the site, it is not clear which of the granted permissions have been implemented. However, in the Officer Report the Council has provided a figure of 62.4 square metres for the original dwelling. This has not been disputed by the appellant and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information presented.
7. The Council has further stated that previous extensions and alterations represent a 70% increase to the footprint of the original dwelling, and that the addition of the proposal would therefore represent an overall increase of 99.5% when compared to the ground floor area of the original home. While the appellant has disputed the inclusion of car port space within the calculation of the current floorspace, it is clear that, even by excluding the car port space from calculations, the addition of the proposal would lead to a sizeable cumulative increase to the footprint of the original dwelling above the 33% limit set out in Policy H7. Therefore, taking account of the cumulative effects of the proposal when combined with previous extensions, the proposal fails to comply with Policy H7(a).
8. However, as evidenced by the justification in the Local Plan, the intention behind Policy H7 is to avoid small, rural, traditional homes being replaced by much larger modern homes and to protect the character and appearance of the countryside. The Council do not contend that there would be any harm in respect of the latter and I agree given the location of the extension, its modest scale, and design which matches the style of the existing dwelling. The purpose of the first element of Policy H7 is to ensure that a stock of smaller properties in the countryside is maintained, providing opportunities for downsizing and affordable properties within the area. There is no doubt that they are legitimate aims in the context of the housing needs of the area. However, the policy refers to extensions over and above the 'original home'. From the information provided there is no definition within the supporting text to define what is meant by 'original home'. On its face that would mean the home as originally built. There may be many older properties that were originally small but, by the time the Local Plan had been adopted in 2018, had been extended to such a degree that they no longer contributed to the stock of small and affordable housing in the area. If a property was substantial at that point in time it seems to me that granting permission for further modest extensions would not harm to the objectives of the Local Plan in respect of protecting the stock of small houses.
9. In light of the calculations provided by the Council that show that the ground floor area of the dwelling has already been increased by significantly more than 33% due to the previous extensions, it is fair to conclude that the appeal property in its current form does not represent a small property. I was able to observe as much at

my site visit; the property is currently a substantial semi-detached home within a row of properties of a similar scale. As such, the addition of the extension would not reduce the stock of smaller properties in the area. Furthermore, due to the limited dimensions of the development, the additional increase proposed would not have a significant impact on the scale of the dwelling or its affordability to potential purchasers. Overall, the proposal would not therefore fundamentally impact on the overarching aims of Policy H7.

10. For the reasons given above, the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the availability of smaller properties in the rural area within which the appeal site is located. Whilst the proposal would be contrary to the terms of Policy H7, as written, it would not be contrary to the overarching objectives of the policy because the previous extensions to the property have already had the effect of removing it from the stock of small scale and affordable housing.

Other matters

11. Neighbouring residents have raised concerns regarding the potential for the proposal to appear overbearing and to cause overshadowing. It has been agreed by the Council that the proposal would not have an adverse effect in this manner and, following the site visit, I have no reason to come to a different conclusion. The scale, layout and positioning of the proposal is such that it would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties from an overbearing or overshadowing perspective.

Conditions

12. The standard time limit condition as well as a condition that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans are necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I have also imposed a condition which requires the materials to match the existing dwelling in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. Consequently, whilst the proposal would be contrary to Policy H7 of the Local Plan, in the strict sense of how the policy is worded, the existing property no longer contributes to the local stock of small and affordable properties which the policy seeks to maintain. Having regard to the planning history of the site, the existing scale of the dwelling and the absence of any other harm I recommend that the appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a rear extension at South View, Singleton Road, Weeton with Preese PR4 3PA, in accordance with the terms of the application 19/0786 dated 28 September 2019 and subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 1 of this recommendation.

C Rafferty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I too agree that the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted for a rear extension at South View, Singleton Road, Weeton with Preese PR4 3PA, in accordance with the terms of the application

19/0786 dated 28 September 2019 and subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 1 of this recommendation.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR