



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/20/3251911

2 Moorend Cottages, Ribchester Road, Langho, Blackburn BB6 8AJ

- 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 Ian Walmsley against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2020/0167, dated 21 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 03 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single-storey lean-to extension to side and replacement with new two-storey extension to side and rear, including balcony to rear and Juliet balcony to side. Single storey extension to side of new two-storey extension. Relocation of front door and construction of new single-storey porch. Further alterations to fenestration at front and rear of existing dwelling including insertion of roof lights. Extension of domestic curtilage to provide new vehicular access and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. No 2 is a semi-detached property that forms part of a small loose cluster of rural built development around Ribchester Road. The appeal property is constructed in stone and slate and it has been previously extended, including a front porch feature and a subservient single storey side extension with a monopitch roof. The appeal site includes the property, its garden and part of the neighbouring agricultural field. It is in the countryside.
4. The proposed extensions and alterations include a 2 storey side extension that would have a slightly lower ridgeline than the host property and it would be set back from the main front elevation. It would have a subservient single storey side extension with a pitched roof and there would be a 2 storey extension to the rear. Taking into account the irregular and extended character and appearance of the pair of properties, the Council considers that the proposed extensions and alterations to the building would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the property or the area. I see no reason to disagree.

5. The proposed extension to the residential land comprises 2 elements. There would be an extension and realignment of the garden immediately adjacent to the property (the garden extension) and the creation of a hardstanding car park with 3 parking spaces (the parking area) in the field to the west.
6. The garden extension would be a relatively modest encroachment into the neighbouring field. It would create a usable area of outdoor space to the rear and side of the extended appeal property. It would provide a reasonable degree of separation between any neighbouring agricultural operations and the dwelling. Notwithstanding that the proposed extensive hard surfacing would not be typical of a rural cottage garden, the garden extension would be well related to the appeal property in terms of its shape and size.
7. The parking area would be an irregularly shaped area of hardstanding approximately 18m by 9m. It would be connected to the appeal property by a path several metres long, set parallel to but away from the roadside hedgerow. Therefore, the parking area would be physically and visually separated from the appeal property and its garden. Part of the roadside hedgerow would be removed to create a new entrance with formal gate posts, a sliding gate and visibility splays. Consequently, the extensive macadam parking area would be a conspicuous and overtly suburban feature.
8. The proposed boundary hedgerow would go some way towards screening the parking area from public views. However, hedgerows would not screen vehicle headlights during hours of darkness and the screening function would be diminished during the times of the year when the shrubs were not in leaf. The hedgerow would not follow any existing landscape features. It would not relate well to the garden boundaries or to the rural field patterns and boundaries. In any case, while planting can help assimilate development into its surroundings, it should not be used to screen inappropriate development from view.
9. By virtue of its length, shape and by protruding into the field partway along the field edge, the parking area would be a discordant feature. It would constitute a significant degree of encroachment into the undeveloped countryside adjacent to the property. It would not relate well to nearby built development or to its rural surroundings. It would be an incongruous, visually obtrusive and uncharacteristic form of rural development.
10. My attention has been drawn to the parking arrangements of other residential properties in the area. On the basis of the information provided, it appears that domestic parking elsewhere is generally well related to the associated property and it forms an integral part of the residential land. In this regard, the proposed parking area does not therefore appear typical of rural parking arrangements. In any case, there is little before me to demonstrate that residential parking elsewhere benefits from planning permission or that it was considered in the same policy context. On this basis, I cannot be certain that it is directly comparable or that it provides a justification for the appeal scheme.
11. Therefore, as a result of the proposed extension to the residential curtilage to provide vehicular access and parking, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the countryside. It would conflict with Policies DMG1 and DMH5 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 Adopted December 2014 which require, among other things, that development is sympathetic to its surroundings, having regard to visual appearance and amenity and patterns of land use.

Other matters

12. The appeal scheme is a resubmission of an application (ref 3/2019/0553) that was withdrawn following concerns relating to highways and the extent of the curtilage. I appreciate that the parties engaged with one another at the pre-application stage and during the processing of the application, and the scheme was amended. While the decision of the Council will have been a disappointment to the appellant, as can be seen from my decision the amended scheme does not overcome the conflict with the development plan.
13. While the proposal could result in a reduction in roadside parking, there is no substantive evidence that the existing parking arrangements are detrimental to the safety of users of the highway. The 3 parking spaces would be the minimum required for a property of the size proposed. The large manoeuvring area would enable vehicles to exit the parking area in forward gear. The visibility splays would be adequate. However, the provision of adequate parking in accordance with modern standards is a requirement of planning policy and it is not therefore a matter that weighs in favour of the proposal.
14. I am not aware of any third party objections to the proposal. The proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring or future occupiers. These are matters that carry neutral weight.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR