



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2020

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/20/3254814

260A Southport Road, Lydiate, Liverpool L31 4EG

- 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 Alan Jones against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2020/00502, dated 16 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is first/second floor extension at front/side, render to all existing/proposed elevations, installation of windows to side (south) elevation at ground floor; and installation of roof lights to both sides of first floor roof.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of 262 Southport Road, with particular regard to outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located along Southport Road, within a residential area. Dwellings in the surrounding area vary in size and type, and include bungalows, cottage style semi-detached properties, and larger detached, two storey houses. No single style, type or age predominates. Properties on this side of the road are well set back, with vegetation in the front gardens giving the area a green and spacious feel.
4. The appeal property (No 260A) has accommodation over two floors but is significantly lower in height than its immediate neighbours on either side, 260 and 262 Southport Road (Nos 260 and 262), both of which are two storey houses. In design terms, the three properties are considerably different from each other. No 262 is of a more traditional style, whereas Number 260 has a more contemporary appearance. Both the appeal property and No 262 appear fairly modest in the street scene, whereas No 260 is larger and more conspicuous.

5. Given the mix of houses in the immediate area, a two storey dwelling with a contemporary design would not necessarily appear out of character in this location, and the overall ridge height of the proposed extension would not be excessive in relation to surrounding properties. However, in order to create accommodation over three floors, which would include living space in the roof, the proposed extension would result in a significant increase in scale compared with the existing dwelling. Although the footprint of the building would not be enlarged significantly, the appeal property would change in appearance from being a modest house with the appearance of a bungalow, to a substantial dwelling.
6. The neighbouring property, No 260, has a stepped roof line that is lower in height on the side adjacent to the appeal property. The appeal property would have no such feature and would appear large in relation to both Nos 260 and 262. Although the overall width would not change, the combined increase in height and bulk in the appeal property would result in it appearing overly dominant in the wider street, particularly when viewed alongside its closely sited neighbour, No 260.
7. The prominent appearance of the property would be exacerbated by the inclusion of a full length central window in the front gable. Although this would enable the roof space to take advantage of natural solar gain, the window would draw attention to the full height of the building and would give the impression of a three storey house. As a result, the proposal would appear overly large and out of character with the area, which is identified within the Lydiate Neighbourhood Plan as being of low, predominately 2 storey buildings. The appellant's suggestion to remove the top window to reduce the impression of a three storey building would not, on its own, be sufficient to overcome the harm caused as a result of the increased scale of the building.
8. I acknowledge that planting at the front of the property could provide screening from the road, but there are no landscaping proposals shown on the submitted plans, and so there is no certainty that such planting would be undertaken.
9. I conclude that the proposed extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with Policy HC4 of the Sefton Local Plan 2017 (Local Plan), which requires in paragraph 1.b. that the size and scale of extensions are in keeping with the original dwelling and surrounding area, and Policy EQ2, which requires that developments make a positive contribution to their surroundings through the quality of their design. The proposal also conflicts with Policy LNP DEV1 of the Lydiate Neighbourhood Plan 2019, which supports development where it protects and enhances the character of the built environment, and with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which requires that development be sympathetic to local character .
10. There is further conflict with the first principle of the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (SPD), which says that extensions should be a small addition to the existing property, rather than an excessively large or disproportionate addition.

Living conditions

11. The appeal property is sited close to the boundary with No 262, which has two windows on the facing side elevation. The ground floor box bay window, which

- serves a habitable room, has its main outlook onto a boundary fence, and the side wall, eaves and roof of the appeal property. The proposed development would raise the height of the side wall and eaves significantly. However, given the height of the existing wall in relation to the box bay window, the proposal would not cause any appreciable deterioration in the outlook from that window.
12. The appeal property is sited to the south of No 262, so the appeal property will already cause overshadowing to the side windows of that neighbouring dwelling. This overshadowing would increase as a result of the proposed extension, particularly to the box bay window. However, the side panels of the box bay, although small, would be less affected by the additional overshadowing and would still receive some direct light. Furthermore, although the box bay is quite a large window, there is also a glazed patio door to the rear elevation which will provide a considerable level of natural light to this habitable space, with direct sunlight during the morning.
 13. Due to the pitch of the roof, the landing window on the side of No 262 would be less affected by increased overshadowing. Furthermore, that window does not serve a habitable room, so less time will be spent in that space.
 14. The side wall of the appeal property is currently faced in brick but is proposed to be rendered, in a colour which has not been specified. Use of a pale, reflective colour would help to mitigate the reduction in direct light, preventing the outlook from the side window from being overly dark or gloomy.
 15. I conclude that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 262 Southport Road with regard to outlook and light. As such, there would be no conflict with paragraph 1.c of Local Plan Policy HC4, which is concerned with the protection of living conditions. The proposal would also be consistent with the third principle of the SPD relating to the effect on neighbours, and with paragraph 127f) of the Framework, which seeks to ensure that development has a high standard of amenity.

Other Matters

16. The proposed extension would make use of sustainable materials and would enable the building to be insulated to a higher standard. However, energy efficiency improvements could be achieved in other ways, which would avoid the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would not cause undue harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, but this is not sufficient to overcome the harm to the character and appearance of the area. I therefore conclude that the development is unacceptable and the appeal is dismissed.

R. Morgan

INSPECTOR