



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 December 2020

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/D/20/3259886

18 Abbots Hall Avenue, Clock Face, ST. HELENS, WA9 4UT

- 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 S. Davies against the decision of St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2020/0414/HHFP, dated 24 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and loft extension with external alterations to door/window openings to the front, side and rear elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development from the appellant's appeal form and the Council's decision notice, rather than the shorter version included on the original application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow, located within a suburban area which is characterised by dwellings of a similar style. Number 18 Abbots Hall Avenue (No. 18) occupies a prominent position, on a bend in the road and in a slightly elevated position. Its corner location means that the plot has a wider street frontage than that of its neighbours, although No. 18 and the adjoining bungalow are slightly narrower in width than those in the immediately surrounding area. Front and rear dormers have previously been added to the appeal property, as well as a front porch, all of which distinguish No. 18 from the adjoining dwelling and the other bungalows in the street, which are generally uniform in appearance.
5. A number of properties in the street have rear dormers, but when I visited the area, I saw no other examples of front dormers on Abbots Hall Avenue. The existing front and rear dormers at No. 18, which are already a prominent feature in the street, extend to the height of the ridge and give the impression

of the property having a flat roof. The proposed continuation of the front dormer across much of the length of the enlarged roof would result in an overly large and unduly dominant feature, which would be out of character with the modest appearance of the surrounding bungalows.

6. The proposed side and dormer extension would be more than 3 metres wide along the frontage, and would occupy more than half of the width of the existing property. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with paragraph 4.18 of the Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD), which aims to ensure that the scale of the extension does not dominate the original dwelling.
7. I acknowledge that the footprint of the proposed extension would not exceed the combined width of the house and garage. However, the additional width, height and bulk of the proposed extension and dormers would together result in disproportionate additions, which would completely change the character of what was originally a small bungalow, increasing its prominence in the street to a harmful degree.
8. The proposed side elevation would be clearly visible from the street, but the inclusion of a large set of patio doors and an upper floor window would prevent the external wall from appearing blank or stark.
9. The extension would result in a greater mass of solid built development closer to 16 Abbots Hall Drive, but the distance between the properties, and their relative orientation, would prevent the proposal being overly dominant or overbearing when viewed from the neighbouring property. However, this lack of harm is not sufficient to overcome the deficiencies of the scheme which I have identified.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would fail to comply with Saved Policy GEN8 of the Unitary Development Plan 2012, which requires householder developments to respect the scale, design, character and appearance of the original dwelling, its neighbours and local setting. There is further conflict with detailed guidance in the Householder Development SPD, which in paragraph 4.1 explains that extensions should be subordinate and sympathetic to the original dwelling and the character of the local area.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR