



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2021

by E Symmons BSc (Hons) MSc MArborA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/20/3260881

81 Cairns Road, Fulwell, Sunderland SR5 1RQ

- 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 Mrs Julie McCabe against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00504/FUL, dated 12 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is for a two storey side extension to provide kitchen/family room, garage and bedroom/en suite extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Within its officer report the Council refer to Policy BH1 as being within the Unitary Development Plan 1998. However, the copy of Policy BH1 submitted is within the Council's Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 (CSDP) adopted in 2020. I have proceeded on the basis that the version of Policy BH1 referred to in the Council's decision, is that which appears within the CSDP.
3. The appellant comments that the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2008 (Design SPD) is not available on the Council's website. A copy of this document has been submitted to me and I have no evidence to suggest that it could not have been sourced by the appellant during the application process. I give this document full weight within my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. This two-storey semi-detached property sits in a prominent position on the corner of Cairns Road and Penrith Road having a dual aspect. Despite its street address, the property fronts on to Newcastle Road which is a wide dual carriageway. It is set-back from the highway behind a footway and area of hardstanding. There is a detached garage with pitched-roof to the rear which is accessed from Penrith Road via double gates and a short driveway.

6. Policy BH1 of the CSDP seeks that developments have a scale, mass, layout and appearance which respect and enhance the positive qualities of nearby properties and the locality. The Design SPD supports this policy with more specific guidance on setback, roof step-down and scale relative to the host dwelling.
7. When viewed from the front, the proposal would be set-back from the current front elevation with a step-down from the established roof ridge in accordance with Design SPD guidance. The Design SPD also recommends that extensions are no greater than 50% of the width of the existing dwelling. This proposal would be 5.5m wide which would exceed this. When viewed from the front however, and in the most part due to the flank element of around 2m being single storey, it would not appear particularly over-dominant. It would be seen within the open context of Newcastle Road which would lessen its visual impact. From the front therefore, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. The Design SPD advises that extensions on corner properties should respect established building lines, so they do not appear more dominant in either street scene. The proposal would project significantly beyond the established Penrith Road building line despite its slightly off-set position from these properties to its rear. This would narrow the views from Penrith Road out towards open space on the far side of Newcastle Road. The increase in built form would be offset to some extent by the demolition of the existing detached garage and the junction width. However, even in combination, these factors would not be sufficient to mitigate its impact on the street scene.
9. Around 2005 an application was consented for the side extension of No 79 on the opposite corner of Cairns Road and Penrith Road. I have not been provided with its full details and therefore, am not fully aware of the circumstances surrounding its consent. However, this has been constructed forward of the established Penrith Road building line. In all likelihood it would have been consented prior to adoption of the current CSDP policy and Design SPD and I have no evidence to the contrary. The extension on the property at No 79, which does not have an additional single-storey element, already projects into the junction space. The proposal would combine with this and further alter the character of the area.
10. To conclude this issue, this proposal, involving combined two-storey and single storey elements, would introduce a relatively large built mass into the space at the top of Penrith Road. Its scale would narrow the vista by impinging upon established views and appear as an incongruous feature. Therefore, despite the lack of harm within Newcastle Road views, the proposal's scale when viewed within the context of Penrith Road, would harm the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Highway safety

11. The proposed garage would be accessed at the side of the property from Penrith Road. The Council's Highway Officer considers the proposed access unsafe for vehicles and pedestrians. This would be due to its position on the convergence of Newcastle Road, Cairns Road and Penrith Road, its conflict with an area of tactile paving and potential vehicle movements over the area of hard standing.

12. These comments do not reflect the proposed access position shown within plans revised on 18 May 2020 and received by the Council on 27 May 2020. These show the access positioned some way back from the junction and tactile paving with no route across the area of hard standing to the front of the property. No further substantive evidence has been provided to support the view that the proposed access would harm highway safety.
13. The Council also considered that two property accesses would conflict with Policy ST2 of the CSDP. This could result in an additional vehicle being parked. However, given that no evidence has been provided that either the retained or new access would harm highway safety, I give little weight to this issue within my decision.
14. Policies BH1, ST2 and ST3 of the CSDP, together and amongst other matters, seek that proposals have an appropriate layout, minimise numbers of vehicle access points and provide safe parking which does not impact flow of traffic, the safe operation of the highway and that of highway users. There is no evidence that the proposal would harm highway safety and conflict with these policies.

Conclusion

15. There is no evidence to support the view that the proposal would harm highway safety. However, its harmful effect upon the character and appearance of Penrith Road would conflict with Policy BE1 of the CSDP and guidance within the Design SPD.
16. For the reasons stated above, the appeal is dismissed.

E Symmons

INSPECTOR