
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 March 2021

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M2325/D/20/3264725

20 Park View Road, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire FY8 4JE

- 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 Eugene O'Hara against the decision of Fylde Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0427, dated 14 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is a gable balcony 2nd floor.
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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 host property and the local area.

Reasons

3. No.20 Park View Road is a two-and-a-half storey, semi-detached property facing a large park. The property is one half of a traditional Victorian era red brick semi, and the front elevation features a prominent projecting two-storey bay window and traditional features such as the barge board lining the front gable. The proposal seeks to erect a balcony on top of the bay window, which would consist of a steel and glass balustrade. The existing window at loft level would be replaced by glazed double doors and side panels with uPVC frames, allowing access to the balcony from this level.
4. Park View Road is generally comprised of similar, traditionally proportioned Victorian properties, although there are some terraced units and an apartment block close to the junction with Mythop Road. Aside from inevitable alterations over time and differences in detailing from one pair to the next, adjoining pairs largely mirror one another in terms of collective scale, traditional materials and form. This makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area given their prominence locally.
5. The 'Extending Your Home' Supplementary Planning Document (2007) (the SPD) advises front extensions should, among other considerations; be sympathetically proportioned with the main building; and in keeping with and do not harm the character of the main building.

6. The proposed balcony would incorporate modern materials such as laminated glass which would appear incongruous set against the more traditional appearance of the front elevation of the host property. This would be compounded by the uPVC framed double doors and side panels which would cover much of the existing space under the gable roof and appear disproportionately large.
7. I note the appeal property and the adjoining No.18 both have windows at loft level, unlike others in the area. Be that as it may, these are much smaller than the bay windows beneath and their proportions are emphasised by the smaller stone heads which serve a room of lower head height. However, I would not consider this justification for the harm I have identified given the additional work required to implement the proposal, nor would the loss of original features of the property on the corner of Park View Road and Mythop Road. While this is unfortunate, my consideration of the appeal is based on merits of the proposal before me.
8. While I would agree that there is not a complete uniformity across all houses lining this side of Park View Road, there are strong shared characteristics in their collective scale, traditional materials and proportions of fenestration and other detailing. The use of non-traditional materials and the scale of the proposal in such a prominent location would cause harm to both the host property and the distinct character and appearance of the area.
9. I am informed of similar developments around the East Beach area and in the Lytham Town Centre Conservation Area, although other than photography I have limited information on any of these. From my own observations on the site visit, the balcony of No.42 East Beach appears to be similar to the proposal in terms of its design and materials and that it is built on top of the two-storey bay window of a Victorian semi. However, I observed houses on this stretch of East Beach are much more varied in their design both individually and between adjacent pairs, while balconies are much more common given the views out to sea. The pair of dwellings next door, for example, are rendered with front dormers and one balcony. In this respect, the balcony of No.42 is less incongruous within its immediate context.
10. No.52 East Beach has incorporated glazed double doors and side panels in a similar design to that proposed. I am advised this development has been granted a Certificate of Lawfulness. However, it is not my role within the context of a section 78 appeal to determine the lawfulness or otherwise of an existing or proposed use and I have not been made aware of an application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use. I can only assess the appeal on its own merits and the existence of other developments which are considered incongruous does not justify allowing the harm to the host building and local area I have identified.
11. To conclude, I find that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the local area. Consequently, it fails to comply with the requirements of Policy GD7 of the Fylde Local Plan (2018), which seeks to ensure developments make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area through high quality new design that responds to its context. The proposal would also be contrary to the advice contained in the SPD and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to ensure development is sympathetic to local character.

Other matters

12. While I note the lack of objection from occupiers of neighbouring properties, this is a neutral matter rather than carrying weight in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and local area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR