

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 July 2021

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/21/3268979

34 Summerhill Drive, Maghull L31 3DW

- 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 David Williams against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2020/02076, dated 14 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a garage extension to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. On 20 July 2021 a revised National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') was issued replacing the version of the Framework published in 2019. However, it does not change design policy in relation to the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling in an area characterised by a range of dwelling types and styles. A number have modest extensions to the front. Summerhill Road is relatively straight, but it rises and curves gradually near to No 34. Although not universal, properties in the road do have open plan frontages and are set back from the road. Properties also have off-street parking and/or front gardens. Several trees populate the front garden of 36 Summerhill Drive.
5. The adjacent dwelling at 32 Summerhill Drive has a single-storey front extension that abuts and extends forward of the appeal property's existing garage. This relationship reflects the slight variation between the front building lines of the semi-detached pairings at 30 and 32 and 34 and 36 Summerhill Drive and other properties on the south-eastern side of the road. This is in response to the curvature of the road.
6. Despite this variation, the proposed garage would project a considerable distance beyond the appeal property's front elevation and the extension at No 32. Given the depth of the proposed extension, the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) explains that this type of development will only be permitted provided that it does not cause harm to,

among other things, the existing building and the character of the area. Extensions should also reflect the consistent line of buildings and the character of other properties in the area, including the design and depth of any front extensions on neighbouring properties. They should also be of a size compatible with the existing building.

7. The height, massing and appearance of the proposed garage would harmonise with the host property and the surrounding area. The proposal would also retain adequate parking and garden provision to the front. However, the size of the proposed extension's forward projection would not be in keeping with the host dwelling and it would not respond to the slight variation in the line of buildings that characterises the street. The effect from the south west would not be particularly harmful owing to the extension at No 32 but when the site is viewed from the north and from the area close to the junction of Summerhill Drive and Ashleigh Road the proposal would be especially noticeable and cause a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the street scene even with the screening afforded by several trees.
8. It is commonplace for residents on the road to have a view of neighbouring properties. I also note the intention to render the flank wall of the extension to No 32. Even so, house extensions do need to be of a size and scale that is in keeping with the original dwelling. The proposal would not achieve this.
9. The submitted plan shows that the extension would be used as a garage, and it may allow larger vehicles to be parked inside thereby affording protection against prospective crime. I am mindful of the appellant's potential longer-term plan to adapt his home to form a downstairs bedroom which could allow a long-standing resident, to remain in his home whilst making efficient use of the house. Both matters weigh in favour of the appeal scheme, but they do not outweigh the significant harm that the proposal would cause especially as there is no substantive evidence to indicate whether the home could still be adapted by using either the current footprint or a smaller extension.
10. I conclude that the proposed extension would cause a significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would not accord with Policy HC4 of A Local Plan for Sefton, Policy MAG 4 of the Maghull Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2037 and the SPD. Jointly, these seek, house extensions to be of high-quality design which is of a size and scale that is in keeping with the original dwelling and respects the general layout of the area.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in terms of the loss of light or outlook. However, the proposed development would not accord with the Development Plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this.
12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR