



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2022

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V4250/W/21/3279931

17 Grasslands, Standish, WIGAN, WN6 0GT

- 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 Kenwright against the decision of Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref A/21/91428/HH, dated 26 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey side extension and to move the existing garden wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the Council made its decision, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been issued. I am satisfied that the revisions to national planning policy do not materially affect the case of either party, and have determined this appeal having regard to the 2021 version of the Framework.

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 detached house located on a corner plot in a recent development of similar houses. There is variation in house type through the estate, but repetition in architectural styles, materials and planting schemes provides a sense of cohesion. The houses are sited fairly close together, but are set back from the road behind driveways and attractively planted front and side gardens. The incorporation of these landscaped areas into the layout helps to soften the built form and creates a feeling of spaciousness.
5. The side elevation of the appeal property, which fronts onto Grasslands, is formed of a rendered gable with a box bay window. The house and garden wall are set back from the pavement edge behind a landscaped strip, which has been planted with trees and a low hedge. This design and layout is replicated in several other nearby houses, including 1 Grasslands and 34 Broadfern, creating a pleasing symmetry within this part of the estate.

6. The proposed side extension would be subordinate to the host property, reflecting the original house in its design and materials. It would be a modest addition which would maintain adequate separation from nearby properties. However, the proposed extension would project well beyond the existing side elevation, and this would have the effect of bringing the house closer to the road. The building line along Grasslands is not particularly strong, being somewhat staggered and broken up by estate roads, but the set back of the houses and boundary walls from the road is an important feature of the street layout. By losing the set back, the proposal would fail to respect the pattern of development in the vicinity.
7. The long side boundary wall at 17 Grasslands is an existing feature of the street, but the effect of its height and solid form are reduced and softened by the landscaped strip in front. By moving it much nearer to the back of the pavement, the brick boundary wall would appear far more prominent within the streetscene, and without the softening provided by the landscaped strip, would result in a hard edge to the garden. In addition, the loss of the treed landscaped strip, which forms part of the estate layout and provides a visual connection to the countryside beyond, would erode the green and spacious quality, causing harm to the character of the area.
8. The proposed relocation of the boundary wall would increase the width of the enclosed rear garden of the appeal property by around 2.4m. This would provide some benefit to the occupiers of the host property, but this would not outweigh the harm to the character of the area. The public benefit provided by the landscaped strip is primarily a visual one, but it nonetheless makes a positive contribution to the character of the area, which can be appreciated by residents and visitors to the area. This benefit is recognised in the House Extensions Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD), which highlights the importance of boundary treatments and open areas of land in residential areas, whose function is to soften the streetscene and provide an amenity function.
9. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy CP 10 of the Wigan Local Plan 2013, which, amongst other considerations, requires that development respects and acknowledges the character of the locality in terms of siting, and is integrated effectively with its surroundings. There is further conflict with the SPD, which requires that extensions should respect the pattern of buildings and spaces in a street.
10. The Council has also referred to Local Plan Policy CP 17, but the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to amenity or quality of life, and I have identified no conflict with that policy.
11. I note the appellant's comments about the implications of this decision for future proposals for side extensions at similar properties nearby. However, any such applications would need to be assessed on their own merits, on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with relevant policy.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and I have identified no considerations which would outweigh this finding. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR