



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2022

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/D/21/3280047

86 Mill Lane, Sutton Leach, WA9 4HW

- 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 Andrew Tinsley against the decision of St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2021/0287/HHFP, dated 15 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension of the existing single storey side extension along with the erection of a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development given on the application form was very detailed, so in the above banner heading I have used the more concise description given on both the decision notice and the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dormer bungalow located on the corner of Mill Lane and Catterall Avenue. The dwelling currently has a single storey side extension but due to the difference in level between the ground floor of the property and Catterall Avenue, the eaves on this are a similar height to top of the boundary fence.
5. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. In the immediate vicinity Mill Lane comprises mainly semi-detached dwellings of varying designs and materials. In contrast to this, Catterall Avenue and the roads leading off it are characterised by flat roofed dormer bungalows. These are set back a consistent distance from the road, with houses on corner plots respecting the building lines of both roads. This gives this area a strong sense of unity and a typically open and spacious suburban character. In being of the same design as the bungalows on Catterall Avenue and its environs, the host property and its attached neighbour, relate strongly to the Catterall Avenue area, although fronting Mill Lane.

6. Guidance on house extensions is provided in the *Householder Development Supplementary Planning Document (adopted June 2011)* (SPD). This indicates that side extensions to dwellings on corner plots can result in a very prominent addition, reducing the degree of openness of the corner. Amongst other things, it states that such extensions should respect existing clear building lines, so that they are not detrimental to the original building line layout and character of the area.
7. Although the proposed extension would not project beyond the main front and rear elevation of the host property, it would extend significantly beyond the established building line along Catterall Avenue. Whilst the existing single storey side extension already does this, its relatively low height caused by the difference in levels between the site and Catterall Avenue, together with its hipped roof, limits the views of it along Catterall Avenue. As such, its impact on the building line along Catterall Avenue is limited and it does not significantly reduce the openness of the corner plot as so little of it is seen above the boundary fence.
8. However, the proposed extension would be clearly seen above the existing fence, as would its projection beyond the existing building line. This would result in the dwelling being an overly dominant feature in the street scene, particularly in views along Catterall Avenue.
9. Its greater visibility would reduce the openness of this corner plot which is a characteristic feature of corner plots in the vicinity. As a result, it would create a sense of enclosure at this junction that would be out of keeping with the wider area.
10. Consequently, I consider that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy GEN8 of the *St Helens Unitary Development Plan (adopted July 1998)* which requires developments to respect the scale, design, character and appearance of the original dwelling and local area.
11. I note the personal circumstances of the appellant and his desire for extra living space. However, personal circumstances seldom outweigh more general planning considerations, and it is likely that the extension would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material.
12. It is not disputed that the proposal would not affect visibility for traffic at the junction. Furthermore, the reason for refusal does not raise any concerns about the proposal's impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties. However, an absence of harm in these matters is a neutral factor. Moreover, I am not persuaded that any increase in the value of the host property that would result from the extension, would have any significant impact on property prices in the area more generally.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR