



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

by K A Taylor MSC URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/W/21/3281368

3 and 5, Austen Drive, Winwick, Warrington WA2 8XE

- 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 Thomas Coon against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/39194, dated 14 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a joint application between the owners of No.3 and No.5 Austen Drive, Winwick Warrington, for a first floor extension to both properties over existing adjoining garages with dormer windows to front and rear of both premises.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal site address on the application form states No.5 Austen Drive (No.5), the appeal form at Section D states No.3 Austen Drive (No.3). The proposal relates to both properties No.3 and No.5. Therefore, for clarity I have taken the site address above from the Council's decision notice for the purposes of the appeal.
3. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt, certain forms of development are not inappropriate development provided they meet exceptions. This includes as set out in Paragraph 149 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) *'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'*.
4. The Council's evidence sets out that both extensions and dormers to the properties, combined with an existing rear extension at No.3 and the proposed rear extension to No.5 would be within the maximum limit of a third or less, be reasonable, would meet the Council's guidance and provisions of the Framework. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment and have considered the proposal on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host properties and the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. Austen Drive forms part of a larger residential estate with a variation of residential property types, style and design. However, these are replicated throughout the individual streets of the wider estate. There are limited additions / extensions to properties, and they retain gaps between pairs of both semi-detached and detached dwellings. Despite some variation in form the properties in the area create a discrete arrangement that appreciably contributes to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appeal site relates to two non-symmetrical properties, No.3 and No.5. They form separate pairs of semi-detached dwellings but are linked by integral garages set back considerably from the frontages. The proposal would add side extensions above each of the linked garages by raising the ridge height, extending forward, creating first floor accommodation with a dormer on both the rear and front elevation. The proposal for No.5 would further incorporate a single storey rear extension adjoining the existing garage which would be converted.
8. I am satisfied from the evidence, that the Council do not find the single storey extension to the rear of No.5, to be unacceptable. My deliberations and decision are therefore focused solely upon the first floor side extensions to both properties.
9. The House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document, 2021 (SPD) advises that to avoid a terracing effect and retain space around a dwelling, a distance of 1 metre at first floor level should be retained between the extension and the boundary of the side of the property. This applies even if an existing single storey extension projects to the boundary and you propose to build above it. It requires side extensions to have some degree of set back from the main front elevation, and a lower ridge line than the original house to clearly demarcate extensions and provide visual break.
10. The proposals would result in both properties being joined at first floor level through a shared boundary wall. Thus, resulting in no boundary separation distance at first floor and significantly reducing the open space and gap they share. The existing gap, which positively retains the individual properties identity as pairs of semi-detached dwellings would be lost by the proposals. This would be further exacerbated as it would bring the garages forward, with limited set back from the original front elevations.
11. Despite the eaves lines of the garages remaining and the ridge heights being lower than the original dwellings. The proposals would create a terracing effect to the detriment of the character and appearance of the host properties and the immediate and wider street scene. The proposals would clearly not meet the guidance as set out in Paragraph 2.6.2 of the SPD. Moreover, it would result in a design style to both properties with an excessive width and appearance of a single block that is uncharacteristic with the appearance of dwellings throughout the residential estate.
12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host properties and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policies QE6 and QE7 of the Warrington Borough Council, Local Plan Core Strategy, 2014. These policies do not support development which would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding

area; proposals should be designed to positively reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance the character, appearance and function of the street scene and local area; and harmonise with scale, proportions of adjacent/existing buildings. In addition, it would be in conflict with the Council's SPD.

Conclusion

13. The proposal conflicts with the development plan, taken as a whole and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

KA Taylor

INSPECTOR