



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2023

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/22/3306995

Kilmarnock, Kenyons Lane, Lydiate, Liverpool L31 0BP

- 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 Terrence Duffy against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2022/01146, dated 9 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of existing bungalow to a two storey dwelling, including extensions to the front and rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit, a rear extension had been added to the dwelling. It is not shown on the plans submitted to the Council. For the avoidance of doubt, this appeal is determined on the basis of the plans that accompanied the planning application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building and its locality.

Reasons

4. The site lies on a street of mixed development including residential, commercial and community land uses. The houses are set behind front gardens or forecourts bounded by low walls and private gardens are present to the rear of the buildings.
5. The southern side of Kenyons Lane is characterised by consecutive semi-detached houses with a substantial uniformity in their spacing, design and external materials. In contrast, the site sits in a short row of houses on the northern side of the road which originate from different phases of construction. The individually designed buildings include single and 2-storey detached and semi-detached homes in varying plot sizes. The variation in the scale, spacing and orientation of the houses, bookended by a commercial dairy and a primary school, provides a more organic and open feel compared to the higher density development opposite.
6. The proposal would constitute a remodelling of the extended bungalow. It would utilise the footprint of the current building with single-storey additions to the front and rear. An additional floor would be added to the full width of the

- existing building and 2 projecting rear gables. A steep pitched roof over the integral garage would provide usable space under those roof slopes.
7. Due to the combination of the width and depth of the bungalow, including the rear projecting gables, the proposed upward extension of the building would give rise to a significant increase in its massing. Although the width of the main section of the building would be comparable to that of some extended semi-pairs on the opposite side of the road, the proposed use of gable ends to the side elevations would result in a significantly longer ridge line.
 8. In conjunction with the uncharacteristically high roof slope proposed over the garage and a resultant large principal elevation which would set on a single plane save for the porch, the degree of additional massing would be considerable. It would appear excessive in the context of the surrounding residential properties. Although the front and rear extensions would maintain subordinate scales against the proposed building, they would contribute to an increased sense of bulk.
 9. The combined extensions would significantly change the appearance of the building. However, in the context of the remodelling of a dwelling, I find reference to the original character of the building is of limited significance. As highlighted by the appellant, the existing building is not recognised for its architectural merit such that it could alternatively be replaced by one or more units of a different design.
 10. Nevertheless, the design requirements of the development plan policies require a high standard of design and appearance that retains the character of development in the area and reflects local distinctiveness. I recognise that the overall appearance would have a degree of consolidation due to the proposed use of external materials comparable with others visible in the locality. It would include the regular layout and proportioning of window openings on the principal elevation.
 11. However, the overall design would be largely undermined by the contrary angle of the garage roof when compared to the main roof, and the low spreading roof over the porch. The effect would be to undermine a cohesive design across the building. In addition to its excessive massing, it would appear awkward; a matter that would be highlighted by the increased prominence in the street scene arising from the building's overall scale.
 12. In views along Kenyon's Lane, even when accounting for the larger plot size, the building would stand out as an unduly prominent element. It would relate poorly to the character and appearance of existing development in the locality on account of its cumulative scale and ungainly appearance.
 13. In support of the proposals, the appellant refers me to the example of 2 new detached properties nearby which replaced a former ambulance station on Kenyons Lane, and I saw them at my site visit. I acknowledge that those buildings have a considerable degree of massing. However, unlike the appeal site, which is set between neighbouring buildings that extend close to the common side boundaries, those properties appear isolated. Their scale is tempered by a greater sense of spaciousness due to the open frontage associated with the school and a gap to development fronting Liverpool Road to the west.

14. There are some larger scaled non-residential buildings in the vicinity. However, these are set back from the road frontage such that their imposition on the streetscape is limited.
15. I acknowledge that land to the north of the site has been approved for new housing which would change the character of that area of Lydiate. As a development that would not immediately impact the streetscene setting of the existing bungalow, I find this is a matter of limited weight in the context of a proposal for domestic extensions.
16. For the above reasons, I find the proposal would result in a poor form of development that would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the locality. It would conflict with Policy HC4 and Policy EQ2 of the Local Plan for Sefton [2017], Policy LNP DEV1 of the Lydiate Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2030 [2019] and the advice in the Sefton Council House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document [2018] as they require new development to have high quality design that compliments and responds positively to the local character, distinctiveness and form of its surroundings.

Other Matters

17. I recognise that the reworking of the property could improve its internal layout. This could make it more attractive as a family home. However, as a benefit not necessarily dependent on the specific design of the proposals, I find this is a matter of limited weight in favour of the scheme.
18. As requirements of the local development plan and national policy, the lack of objections in relation to issues such as highway safety, flood risk and the living conditions of neighbours are not matters in favour of the development. Similarly, the lack of objections from third parties does not represent a benefit in favour of the proposal.
19. There is a minor discrepancy between the elevation and floor plans in relation to the position of the porch door. However, consequent to my findings above, this is not a determinative matter in the appeal.

Conclusion

20. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the 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 not be allowed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR