



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2023

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/D/23/3314565

15 The Copse, Newton-Le-Willows, St Helens WA12 9YF

- 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 Martin against the decision of St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2022/0564/HHFP, dated 8 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey front and rear, and two storey side extensions to a dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. No 15 is a large 2 storey detached dwelling at the head of a cul-de-sac. It is in a residential area characterised by properties in similar styles and external materials. Most properties appear to have single storey garage side extensions. Properties are set back from the road behind generally open frontages with off street parking. The built environment is softened by landscape planting, mature hedgerows and trees. The similar ages and design of properties, the palette of materials and the consistent frontage treatment and planting results in a harmonious character and appearance.
4. The single storey rear extension would be unobtrusively sited and it would be similar in scale to the existing conservatory. The first floor side and rear extension above the existing garage would be set back from the front elevation of the property and its ridge would be slightly lower than that of its host, resulting in a degree of subservience to No 15. Two off street parking spaces would be provided. The Council considers that these elements of the proposal would be acceptable including in terms of visual amenity, living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and parking provision. I see no reason to disagree.
5. The proposed garage would have a footprint of roughly 6.1 x 5.2m and it would be about 2.4m to its eaves and 4.1m to its ridge. It would be forward of the front building line of the dwelling and partly to the front of it. The garage would be set at an oblique angle to the dwelling and it would be attached to it primarily by a tapering linking extension to the side of the dwelling.

6. The garage would be prominently sited to the front of the dwelling and adjacent to the turning head of the cul-de-sac. By virtue of the open frontages, it would be readily visible from locations elsewhere on The Copse, including on the approach from the junction with the A572. The garage would be a large and bulky building that would be out of keeping with the subservient scale and siting of the side garages that characterise the area. It would have an awkward relationship with, and it would not respect or relate well to, the dwelling. It would dominate the frontage and it would be a conspicuous and incongruous feature at the head of the cul-de-sac. It would largely obscure the tall hedge to its rear and the marked increase in the hard built environment would not be softened or integrated by vegetation. It would detract from and it would diminish local distinctiveness and sense of place.
7. There is a large detached double garage forward of No 1. While that garage is prominently sited close to the A572, it is set back from The Copse in substantially enclosed and mature grounds, visually in keeping with its host and it is screened and softened by planting. No 59 also has a detached garage to its front, but the dwelling is sited away from the cul-de-sac and its garage is unobtrusively set back in a wide gap between the dwellings that front the road. The shallow hipped roof and detached siting, and the landscape setting, of that garage reduce its visual mass and bulk. Neither of these is directly comparable to the appeal proposal including in terms of its scale, design, siting and surroundings. Large garages elsewhere and that do not provide a visual context for the proposal do not provide a justification for it.
8. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with Policy LPD04 of the St Helens Borough Local Plan up to 2037 that requires, among other things, that extensions respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area including in terms of scale and design. It would also conflict with the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document Householder Development in relation to front extensions.

Other Matters

9. The scheme was amended during the processing of the application to address the concerns of the Council. However, while the side and rear extensions are unexceptional, the revisions to the front extension, including the link extension and the removal of a small extension to the garage extension, were not sufficient to overcome the Council's concerns.
10. The garage would be required following the conversion of the existing garage to living accommodation. However, there is little evidence to demonstrate that there are no alternative solutions or forms of development that could deliver similar benefits without the harm and the policy conflict that I have found.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict.
12. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester INSPECTOR