
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2372/D/23/3317111
59 Earnsdale Road, Darwen BB3 1HS

- 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 Ryan King against the decision of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 10/22/0721, dated 8 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a double storey side and rear extension with part rear single storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. An application for costs was made by the appellant against the Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The proposal is to enlarge and externally alter the appeal property, which is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling within a predominantly residential area. Like its attached counterpart, the walls of the house include pebbledash render with elements of brick and stone detailing. The roof is tiled with hipped ends. No 59 addresses Earnsdale Road along which buildings vary in type, size, style, and general appearance. There is, therefore, some variety to the existing built form within the street scene and the local area to which the site belongs.
5. The new rear addition would exceed the width of the host building and project outwards from the main wall into the back garden of No 59. With a sizeable 2-storey element to the rear extension, and a substantial gable facing the back garden, an addition of this scale and mass could not reasonably be described as a subordinate addition, which is a requirement of Policy RES E7 (i) of the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
6. There would also be an uneasy transition between the proposal and the host building as the 2-storey extension wraps around a rear corner of the dwelling. In views from the road just in front of the site, the new hipped roof would be

noticeably lower than that of the host roof. The slope of the new hipped roof would also be at a right angle to the side roof slope of the main dwelling. The visual effect of this arrangement would be unconvincing given that the proposal would fail to be assimilated with the main roof. When seen from in front of the site, the proposal would attract undue attention as an awkward 'add-on' to the existing house.

7. With regard to materials, the application of silicone coloured render to the main house in place of pebbledash would be appropriate to the style and age of the dwelling. However, the singular use of charred timber cladding to the new extension would jar with the lighter colour and texture of the proposed render. The sharp contrast in materials between the main house and the new extension would visually accentuate the awkward visual relationship between them.
8. While variation is a characteristic in the external materials and general appearance of existing development in the local area, I saw that timber cladding is generally applied with restraint. Notably, the front elevations of the bungalows a little further along Earnsdale Road to the site include vertical timber cladding to their front elevations which is visible from the road. However, this material is above and below a window and it covers less than half the façade, with the remaining front and sides of the single storey dwellings largely constructed of brick. Timber, whilst evident, is used as a feature at the front of these dwellings with brick remaining predominant. During the site visit, I saw no obvious examples of properties with 2-storey timber clad extensions that were visible from the road, as proposed.
9. I agree that timber can be a high-quality material and that its natural appearance can blend into areas that have a verdant character with woodland evident from the road beyond the main house. In my experience, developments that contrast in materials and general appearance can also contribute to the diversity of an area and add visual interest to the street scene. However, in this case, the proposed development would result in a side extension with an awkward corner element and a rather stark, uncharacteristic, outward appearance. To my mind, the proposal does not achieve its objective of enhancing the appearance of the dwelling by introducing an extension with a contemporary twist nor would it be assimilated into the surrounding area. To the contrary, the proposal would draw the eye from the road as a conspicuous, discordant, and unwelcome addition to the local area.
10. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy CS16 of the Blackburn with Darwen Core Strategy and Policy 11 of the Local Plan Part 2. These policies require new development to achieve a high standard of design, respect, enhance and reinforce local character, and make a positive contribution to the surrounding area. It is also contrary to Policies RES 1E, RES 7E and RES 8 of the Council's SPD, which note that the design and materials of an extension should be in keeping with the existing property. The proposal is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that developments should add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.
11. The appellant criticises the Council on the grounds that its refusal is based on a subjective judgment. Matters of character and appearance inevitably are. I also do not accept that the Council has acted unfairly during the application

process. To my mind, the exchange of emails provided between the Council and appellant indicate a difference of opinion on the merits of the proposal rather than evidence that the Council's stance was too one sided or unfair.

12. I note the appellant's opinion that the proposal would qualify as permitted development save for the external materials proposed and that others raised no objection. However, planning permission is sought for the proposal and a lack of objections is not necessarily a reliable indicator that the development sought is therefore acceptable.

Conclusion

13. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
14. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR