



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2023

by J Williamson BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/D/23/3321467

2 Lane Cottages, Burrow Heights Lane, Lancaster LA2 0PG

- 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 Leon Wanless against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01584/FUL, dated 21 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of proposed development provided on the planning application form adequately describes the proposal. I have not been provided with any evidence that the appellant agreed to any changes. I have therefore based my Decision on this description.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The original building is two storeys of traditional design, constructed of stone under a slate roof. The property has previously been altered and extended, including the addition of two storey and single storey extensions to the rear and side, which are 'modern' in design. The two-storey addition is of a gable design extending off the rear elevation, with timber clad elevations and a slate roof. The single storey additions extend off the side and rear of the two-storey extension, with a flat roof design and elevations finished in render and timber cladding. I agree with the view of the Inspector who dealt with appeal ref APP/A2335/D/223292966, that the existing extensions constitute significant additions to the original property. The character of the original dwelling is that of a small-to-modest sized stone country cottage.
5. The appeal site is in a secluded, countryside location, sited amongst a group of around 10 dwellings positioned around the junction of Burrow Heights Lane and Burrow Road. A couple of the dwellings, opposite the appeal site, have recently been constructed. There are around half a dozen or so other dwellings within the vicinity of the site.

6. The properties in the area comprise of a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings, mostly two-storey, of traditional design, and mostly constructed of stone under slate roofs. That said, the immediate neighbouring property north-west of the site is a bungalow, and some of the neighbouring properties have rendered elevations. The overall character of the area is that of a small hamlet in a quiet countryside location, comprising mainly of modest sized dwellings of traditional design, constructed of traditional materials.
7. Due to the topography of the area, the layout of the properties, and the presence of numerous trees and hedges, the lower section of the appeal dwelling is not visible from wider public vantage points. However, both storeys and the front and north-western facing side elevations of the property are clearly visible from the road which it fronts, including the north-western facing side elevation of the two-storey rear extension, and the front elevation of the single-storey side/rear extension. The upper section of the two-storey rear extension and the first floors and roof tops of surrounding properties are also visible from Burrow Road, when travelling in a northerly direction from the junction with Five Ashes Lane.
8. The proposal would add a two-storey extension above most of the existing single storey extension to the side and rear. The associated roof ridges would be virtually as high as the existing main roof ridge. The design would follow that of the existing 'modern' additions, as opposed to the traditional design of the original dwelling. The elevations would be clad in timber and the roof would be covered in slates, to match the materials on the existing two storey extension.
9. If the mass, volume, and floor area of the existing extensions are not already more extensive than the original, the addition of the proposed extension would certainly result in the combined extensions being significantly larger than the original dwelling in all respects, except for height. Such a disproportionate increase would dominate the original property, thereby significantly harming its character.
10. As it would rise above the side boundary with the neighbouring bungalow, the angled design of the proposed extension would become visible from the road which the property fronts, in contrast to the angled design of the existing single storey extension which is screened from public vantage points.
11. Being visible from the road the proposal would be very prominent in the street scene. It would also be visible from Burrow Road when travelling north from Five Ashes Lane. Following the construction of the single storey side/rear extension, space has been retained above the height of the side boundary between the appeal dwelling and the neighbouring bungalow. Extending the property to the side/rear as proposed would reduce this space. At two storeys high, the height differences between the resultant dwelling and the neighbouring bungalow would be emphasised. The proposed extension would extend awkwardly off only the rear part of the north-western facing side elevation of the existing two-storey rear extension.
12. These factors, combined with the other 'modern' design features and timber cladding, would result in extensions not suitably related to the original dwelling. For the reasons outlined, I consider the proposal would have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the original property. As the

proposal would be prominent within the street scene, I consider it would be harmful to the street scene and therefore the character of the area.

13. I note that the scheme before me has been altered from the proposal dismissed at the previous appeal. However, I consider the nature and extent of the changes have not overcome the essence of the concerns expressed by the previous Inspector.
14. Consequently, due to the siting, design, scale, mass and external materials, the proposal would result in excessively large, highly prominent, incongruous additions, which would significantly harm the character of the original dwelling and the area. As such the proposal would not accord with Policy DM29 of the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031, Part Two, (2020), (LP Part 2). This Policy requires, among other things, new development to positively contribute to the character of the area through good design and having regard to siting, scale, and materials. The proposal would also not accord with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which also requires, among other things, new developments to add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.
15. I note that the Council refused the proposal partly on the basis that it did not accord with Policy DM46 of the LP Part 2. As I have not been provided with any evidence regarding the location of the site *vis-a-vis* protected landscape, I have not assessed the proposal against this policy.

Other Considerations, Planning Balance & Conclusion

16. The appellant proffers several other considerations which he considers weigh in favour of the proposal, ie his family has grown; since the Covid 19 pandemic more space is required to work from home; the proposal is commensurate with the size of the site; concerns regarding privacy due to the relationship between the appeal dwelling and the new dwellings opposite the site; in allowing the new dwellings the local planning authority (LPA) accepted a design approach that includes features which do not appear in the traditionally designed properties in the locality, and, the uncertainty of a proposed 'Garden Village' in the locality.
17. I appreciate the personal circumstances of the appellant. However, the planning system operates mainly in the public interest rather than the private interests of individuals. The size of the site is not the only factor to be borne in mind. In approving the construction of the new dwellings opposite the site the LPA would have considered the impact on the living conditions of existing neighbouring properties, including the appeal dwelling, and concluded the relationship to be acceptable. As I have not been provided with any details of the proposed 'Garden Village' I can attach little weight to this matter.
18. I therefore consider that there are no other considerations that would lead me to conclude other than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, for the reasons outlined, the appeal is dismissed.

J Williamson

INSPECTOR