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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 05 July 2024

**by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 31 July 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/24/3344258**

**22 Willows Park Lane, Longridge, Lancashire PR3 3HJ**

- 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 & Mrs Marle against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is 3/2024/0105.
  - The development proposed is described as a proposed two storey extension to side and rear with first floor balcony and glazed canopy over patio area to rear, and first floor projection over new porch canopy to front
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
  - a) The character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area; and,
  - b) The living conditions of the occupiers of No.24 with particular regard to overlooking and loss of privacy.

### Reasons

#### *Character and Appearance*

3. No.22 Willows Park Lane is a two-storey detached dwelling of simple design, with attached garage to the side. The dwelling is set back from the street with parking and garden to the front. Land levels rise from Willows Park Lane meaning the dwelling is positioned at a slightly higher level than the highway. The appeal dwelling lies within a row of properties that are of similar design. A prevailing characteristic within this group are short lean-to canopies over open or enclosed porches. The adjacent No.20 Willows Park Lane (No.20), has been extended towards the appeal site with a two-storey side extension. That extension is flush with the front elevation and has matching eaves and ridge heights to the original dwelling. A public footpath is located between the appeal site and No.20, which leads to Lune Street to the rear. On the opposite side of the road is Ash Lane, which includes dwellings of varying design and has a distinctly different character to Willows Park Lane.
4. The proposals, in part relate to the construction of a side extension. The side extension would be constructed over the existing garage and would have a width which is narrower than the existing two-storey element of the dwelling.

As such the degree of projection to the side would not be significant. The extension would be constructed flush with the front façade and would have eaves and ridge heights which match the existing. In this regard, the extension would reflect No.20 which has been extended to the side in a similar manner. This would create a visual sense of balance between the properties and the intervening public footpath. Therefore, the lack of set back or reduced ridge height for the side extension would not result in a discordant extension that would be unduly harmful to the dwelling or wider street scene.

5. However, the proposals also include a first-floor gable positioned to the front façade. This first-floor forward projection, introduces a design feature which is not consistent with the more simple design of the host dwelling. The gable would appear as an anomaly in the row of dwellings which would visually disrupt the pattern of development within the street. In addition, the full width canopy adds greater horizontal emphasis to the dwelling. Again, this would be at odds with the prevailing character of the row, where front canopies are limited to only part of the front elevation. Therefore, the extensions to the front would visually contrast with the modest design and character of the dwelling and wider row of properties.
6. Examples of extensions have been cited at No.48 Willows Park Lane, and Birchfield Drive. Neither of these properties fall within the visual context of the appeal site and they also include designs which are not the same as the proposals before me. I therefore do not find them to be directly comparable. I acknowledge that the dwellings on Ash Lane opposite are varied in design. However, the main visual context for the appeal site is the row of dwellings on Willows Park Lane, which has a distinctly different character to Ash Lane. Therefore, the presence of front gables within Ash Lane does not alter my conclusions. In any event, I have assessed the proposals on its individual merits.
7. For the above reasons, the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area. Therefore, the development would conflict with Policies DMG1 and DMH5 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 (the CS), and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). Together, amongst other things, these require development to be of a high-quality design. The development would also conflict with Policy LNDP3 of the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2028 (the LNP), which requires development to be of good design that responds positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the surroundings.

#### *Living Conditions*

8. The rear elevation of No.24 Willows Park Lane (No.24) is set back slightly behind the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling. To the rear of No.24 is a short private garden serving that property. A close board fence defines the boundary between the two properties.
9. The proposals include a first-floor balcony which would be provided to the rear. This would be accessed via a door from the master bedroom. The balcony would include a low balustrade and the space created would be of sufficient size for it to be utilised as external space. The first-floor positioning would mean that the platform would be well above the height of the shared fence

line. While No.24 is set back, this is not significant. The position of the balcony would be set away from the boundary meaning that much of the garden of No.24 would be visible. As such, the position of the balcony would facilitate direct views over the boundary fence and into the adjacent garden space. The degree of overlooking that would be available would be significant. The presence of people on the balcony would be intrusive, significantly reducing privacy which would be to the detriment of the occupiers enjoyment of their property. Therefore, the balcony would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupants of No.24.

10. The appellant has suggested that a privacy screen could be erected along the side of the balcony. Such a screen, provided it is of sufficient height and opacity, would reduce the ability to directly overlook much of the garden of No.24. I am satisfied that such a screen could be provided without resulting in other knock-on design and amenity issues due to the likely modest nature of any addition, along with its distance from the neighbouring property.
11. I conclude that the development would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of occupiers of No.24 with particular regard to overlooking and loss of privacy. However, I am satisfied that the issue could be satisfactorily addressed through appropriate mitigation. Therefore, the development would comply with Policy DMG1 of the CS and Policy LNDP3 of the LNP. Amongst other things, these expect development to not have an adverse effect on the living conditions to the occupiers of existing properties.

### **Conclusion**

12. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

*D Cleary*

INSPECTOR