



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2024

by J D Clark BA (Hons) DpTRP MCD DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/D/24/3346579

Sycamore Lodge, New Cut Lane, Halsall, Lancashire L39 8SN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr P Tierney against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/0138/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 2no glazed gables to first floor windows on front elevation.
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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 existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a detached two-storey dwelling in a rural setting. The area is characterised by open fields to the front of the site, on the other side of the road and there are groupings of agricultural buildings close by to the rear of Sycamore Lodge and further along New Cut Lane both to the south-east and the north-west. There are high gates and hedges to the front of the property which partly screen the dwelling but the upper floor and roof are clearly visible from New Cut Lane.
4. Sycamore Lodge is described as a non-designated heritage asset although no list of that designation has been submitted. The Council describe it as appearing on the first edition 1890's basemap and so being more than a century old. This has not been disputed by the appellant. No other information about its heritage has been submitted but its appearance is that of a traditional rural cottage when viewed from the front.
5. To the rear, the dwelling has been extensively extended most notably by a large first floor rear extension that reflects the modernisation of this dwelling rather than its traditional character. This differs to that shown on the submitted plans in that it appears larger and the fenestration and balustrade differ.
6. The proposed glazed gables would add pitched roof dormer windows to the front of the dwelling and would provide additional headroom to two front bedrooms. The internal sloping roofs and low windows in these bedrooms restrict views of the open fields to the front in that it is necessary to stoop down to look out of them. Whilst this may be inconvenient and restrictive and affect the use of the rooms, it is

part of the traditional charm of the dwelling. This charm also characterises its external appearance.

7. Despite the extensive alterations to the rear of the house, the glazed gables at the front of the house would detract from the traditional character of the dwelling. Although they reflect the roof pitch of the front porch and materials would match those on the existing roof, they would be out of keeping with the appearance of the dwelling. It would lose its traditional charm which would have a negative affect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. Whilst I accept that different ages and design of dwellings can be found within the surrounding rural area, none have been specifically referred to that are comparable with the appeal site.
8. Consequently, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Local Plan Policy GN3¹ and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document Design Guide², which collectively require development to be of a high quality design that relates to the existing building and complements or enhances the attractive attributes of its surroundings.

Other Matter

9. The appeal site is within the Green Belt but there is no dispute between the parties that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. National Green Belt policy limits extensions to dwellings that would not be disproportionate to the original dwelling³. Although the dwelling has already been extended, the additional volume increase of the proposed glazed gables would be minimal and therefore I have no reason to reach a different conclusion on this matter. This does not however, alter my conclusion on my main issue.

Conclusion

10. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Consequently, the appeal should be dismissed.

J D Clark

INSPECTOR

¹ West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document October 2013.

² West Lancashire District Council Supplementary Planning Document Design Guide January 2008.

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government National Planning Policy Framework December 2024.