



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2019

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MIEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th June 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/D/19/3224621

139 Clifton Drive, Blackpool FY4 1RT

- 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 Mrs R Law against the decision of Blackpool Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/0762, dated 31 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - ii) whether the proposal would make adequate provision for parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No 139 is a detached 2 storey dwelling with a driveway to one side leading to a detached garage to the rear of the property. It is part of a group of similar properties at the southern end of Clifton Drive. Of particular note are the distinctive matching roofs and the 2 storey bays that project from the front elevations. Properties are evenly spaced and on the same building line, set back from the street behind front gardens with low walls. There is a uniformity in terms of appearance and layout which results in a coherent and harmonious street scene.
4. The proposed development would extend across the driveway, finishing at the shared boundary and in close proximity to No 141. The close spacing between properties would not result in harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers. However, the reduced separation would be markedly different and not in keeping with the regular spacing and separation distances that are characteristic of the street.

5. The extension would be a substantial and bulky addition to the property. Although the ridgeline would be below the height of the host property, by virtue of its width and limited setback, the extension would be a wide and relatively flat continuation of the front elevation. In this respect, it would not appear subordinate to the original dwelling. The set back from the projecting 2 storey bay, with its feature windows to all 3 sides at both ground and first floors levels, would not prevent the host property from being overwhelmed by the proposal. Notwithstanding the use of similar materials and design features, by virtue of its size and relationship to the front elevation, the extension would not relate well to, or be in keeping with, the character of the original building or the neighbouring properties. It would be an incongruous feature that would disrupt the rhythm of the street scene and it would not make a positive contribution to the character of the area.
6. My attention has been drawn to a 2 storey side extension at No 144 (ref 18/0137). While there are apparent similarities, there are nevertheless differences between the schemes. The permission relates to a first floor extension only, over a garage that was constructed previously under permitted development rights. The extension had been constructed at the time of visit and I observed that there were other differences including the wider separation between No 144 and neighbouring properties, and the relationship of the extension to the original front elevation and projecting bay. That scheme is not therefore directly comparable to the appeal scheme and it does not provide a justification for the proposal, which I have considered on its own merits.
7. I note that the appeal scheme is a resubmission following the refusal of an earlier application (ref 18/0303) and that the proposal has been amended during the application process, including through a reduction in ridge height. Although I acknowledge that the appellant has sought to overcome the concerns of the Council, the proposed extension would nevertheless result in harm as I have outlined above.
8. The Council considers that the future storage of refuse and recycling bins would further harm the character and quality of the area. At the time of my visit, the bins were reasonably unobtrusive, being located near the garage and towards the rear of the property. However, this is within the footprint of the extension. An alternate location has been suggested in the gap between No 139 and the shared boundary with No 137, which would also be the external access to the rear of the property. However, I am not persuaded that this would be a particularly convenient or practical solution. The gap is not much wider than the bins, and it would therefore be awkward to use and manoeuvre them in this space. In this respect, the proposal would not function well. Given these constraints, it therefore seems likely that the bins would be stored to the front of the property, in a more prominent location which would be detrimental to the street scene and which would not make a positive contribution to the overall quality of the area.
9. I therefore find that the proposed development would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would be in conflict with Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2012-2027) Adopted January 2016 (the Core Strategy), saved policies LQ1, LQ14, BH3 and AS1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 Adopted June 2006 (the Local Plan) and the design guidance in the Extending Your Home Supplementary Planning Document Adopted November 2007 (the SPD). These

require, among other things, that development should be well-designed, including in relation to the original building and neighbouring properties, that it should enhance the character and appearance of the area, make adequate provision for the storing of refuse and recycling, and that extensions should be subordinate to the original property and not overly dominant in the street. It would also conflict with policies 127 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), including in relation to requirements for development to function well and to improve the character and quality of the area, taking into account design standards and guides in supplementary planning documents.

Parking provision

10. The side extension would result in a significant loss of off-street parking. The remaining driveway and proposed garage would not provide an adequate number of parking spaces for the extended property. Consequently, there would be an increased demand for on-street parking in an area which is already subject to parking restrictions and parking pressure. At the time of my visit, there were parking spaces available on Clifton Drive. However, as a result of the proximity of the street to the sea front and associated attractions, the demand for parking is likely to be considerably greater during the evenings, weekends and holiday periods. While this would not result in harm to the safe operation of the highway, the Council considers that it would be detrimental to public amenity.
11. Although no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the increased demand for on-street parking could be accommodated, the appellant has sought to overcome the concerns of the Council by instead proposing that the required parking spaces be provided in the front garden. While the SPD does allow for alternative off-street parking provision, this should not be to the detriment of the overall streetscape. In particular, the SPD seeks to avoid the hard surfacing of a significant proportion of front garden areas for car parking where this would detract from the character of the area. In this case, in the absence of plans that demonstrate the use of the front garden for parking, I cannot be certain that this would not harm to the character and appearance of the street scene and the area. This is not therefore a matter that could be addressed by planning condition.
12. I therefore find that the proposed development would not make adequate provision for off-street parking and it has not been demonstrated that alternative solutions would be acceptable. The proposal is therefore in conflict with the development plan, including policies CS7 of the Core Strategy, saved policy AS1 of the Local Plan and the SPD. These require, among other matters, that development incorporates well integrated and appropriate levels of car parking, and that proposals for off-street parking are not detrimental to the streetscape.

Other Matters

13. I accept that there would be some limited economic benefit in the short-term during the construction phase. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest that there would be any significant social or environmental benefits arising from the proposed extension. Moreover, while I acknowledge the appellant's desire to continue to live at the property, it has not been demonstrated that there are no alternative proposals which would similarly

provide additional accommodation without conflict with the development plan. On the basis of the evidence before me, these are not therefore matters of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

14. The appellant has indicated a willingness to accept any planning conditions considered reasonably necessary, including for the storage of bins to the side of the property and for the conversion of the front garden for parking. However, for the reasons set out above, I do not consider that these are matters that could be addressed by conditions. Furthermore, the harm to the character and appearance of the property and the area arising from the proposed extension could not reasonably be mitigated by condition.

Conclusion

15. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning appeals must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. I have found that the appeal scheme does not comply with policies in the development plan, with which the proposal conflicts when read as a whole. Compliance with other policies in the development plan or the Framework are not additional benefits of the scheme that would outweigh the conflict. No material considerations have been identified that would indicate making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR