
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/D/17/3171639

481 Aigburth Road, Liverpool, L19 9DL

- 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 Brendon O'Hara against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref 16H/2471, dated 26 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2017.
 - The proposed development is described as new roof with increase in ridge height incorporating front and rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No. 481 and the locality.

Reasons

3. No. 481 is situated at the southeastern end of a row of 7 houses, the 2-storey frontages of which have a number of features in common. They include a hipped main roof, with plain roof slopes, and a pattern of fenestration which includes a 2-storey bay feature positioned to one side. These features of the appeal property are clearly visible from Aigburth Road, notwithstanding that a tall wall runs along part of the front boundary of the site. The dwelling immediately to the southeast of No. 481 is markedly different in design, with a pitched main roof and a front gable feature. The wider locality includes a wide range of property styles, designs and sizes.
 4. The proposed new roof of the house would be pitched with side gables and a higher ridge level than that of the existing main roof. The proposed change of roof design, from hipped to pitched, would significantly alter the appearance of the dwelling relative to the row of similar houses of which it forms part. However, given its end of row position relative to those neighbouring dwellings to the northwest and the markedly different design of the adjacent house to the southeast, this would not be fatal to the proposal. Furthermore, the angle of the front and rear roof slopes would be similar to those of the existing roof and the proposed increase in ridge level would be small. The new main roof would not appear unduly dominant relative to its neighbours. I consider that this element of the proposal would be sufficiently in keeping with the scale and design of the existing dwelling and the adjacent properties to be acceptable.
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5. The proposed new roof would include a front and a rear dormer window. I saw a number of other properties in the locality with front dormer windows and consider therefore, that they are acceptable in principle. However, the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1: House Extensions* (SPG) indicates that where the principle of a dormer at the front of a property is considered to be acceptable in principle, its design should match the vertical line of existing windows, amongst other things. Unlike others I saw in the locality, the proposed pitch roofed front dormer would not be vertically aligned with the windows below. As a result, it would have the appearance of an awkward and obtrusive addition to the front elevation of the dwelling. When seen from Aigburth Road, it would give an impression of poor design, which Policy H8 of *The City of Liverpool Unitary Development Plan, 2002* (UDP), seeks to avoid, in keeping with the aims of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework).
6. Whilst the proposed rear dormer would technically conflict with the SPG, as its roof level would be higher than that of the existing roof, it would be lower than the ridge level of the proposed main roof. Furthermore, in my judgement, it would be sufficiently small so as not to appear over-dominant. Views of this dormer window from public vantage points would be likely to be limited to glimpses from Ivyhurst Close, to the rear, and from Holmefield Road, to the northwest. Its visual impact would be sufficiently small to be acceptable and the technical conflict with the SPG that I have identified would not be sufficient to justify withholding planning permission.
7. Nevertheless, I conclude overall that, with particular reference to the proposed front dormer, the appeal scheme would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of No. 481 and the locality, contrary to the aims of UDP Policy H8 and the Framework.

Other matters

8. I understand that the proposal is intended to provide additional accommodation to meet the needs of the appellant's growing family. However, it appears to me that the proposed front dormer would, itself, facilitate only a relatively small increase in floor space, to which I attribute little weight.

Conclusions

9. I conclude on balance that the proposal would not amount to sustainable development under the terms of the framework and it would conflict with the Development Plan. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR