
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2017

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M2372/D/17/3174264

2 Cambridge Close, Blackburn BB1 1DY

- 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 Naeem Zaman against the decision of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 10/17/0039, dated 11 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a dormer to rear to create additional living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the dormer window on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey link detached dwelling that backs onto Withers Street and Cambridge Street. Along the side boundary of the site is Higher Audley Street which curves around the staggered rear building line of neighbouring dwellings on Cambridge Close. Although the dwelling is set back from Higher Audley Street and Withers Street, the dwelling's rear elevation is very visible and prominent in both street scenes, as the timber boundary fence only screens some of the ground floor.
4. I understand the property's permitted development rights have been removed through a planning condition¹ for extensions such as dormer windows, hence the need for planning permission. I also gather the Council are not opposed to dormer windows being introduced into the area and a solution has been suggested to the appellant in tune with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Despite the alternative scheme I have considered this appeal on its planning merits in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The proposal, in terms of RES E13 of the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), is marginally lower than the host dwelling's ridge line, and set-in from its eaves line and the sides of the existing roof, even though the dormer window's cheeks would be flush with the gable elevations and constructed from red facing brick to tie in with the property.

¹ Council Application Ref: 10/85/1451

6. Leaving this to one side, pitched roofs are a characteristic of dwellings in the area. There are also no examples of dormer windows within Cambridge Close. So, even though dormer windows can be an effective way of increasing the size of an existing home, they should be positioned and design to minimise their effect on the appearance of the property and the street scene.
7. The proposal would occupy most of the dwelling's rear roof plane, especially given the very limited set-ins proposed. Furthermore the proposed flat roof design would not integrate well with the pitched roof form of the dwelling. Consequently, the proposal's scale and massing would be very dominant when viewed from Withers Street, Cambridge Street and Higher Audley Street. It would be an incongruous addition to the dwelling which would harm the straightforward architectural rhythm of the unaltered roof planes of dwellings on Cambridge Close, despite the use of high quality materials. The proposal's scale and massing would not be in keeping with the local area, while its design would not complement existing features as sought by RES 1A of the SPD or secure high quality design as sought by paragraph 17 of the Framework.
8. Although dormer windows appear to form part of inner Blackburn's characteristics, the appeal property is a link detached dwelling unlike the terraced dwellings cited on London Road and Dunsop Street. They are not therefore comparable to one another. Added to this, despite interest from the appellant's neighbours at 16 Cambridge Close, this property has not been extended through a rear dormer window.
9. Nevertheless, I recognise the proposed development is sought to provide extra living accommodation for the family, given a medical condition of one family member whom could then be accommodated on the first floor. The proposal would allow for larger bedrooms within the roof space, even though the number of bedrooms within the dwelling would remain unchanged. I attach this moderate positive weight, given the key ambitions of the Local Plan² and paragraphs 17 and 50 of the Framework. These aim to provide a mix of housing for all sections of the community and secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
10. However, despite neighbouring residents not objecting to the scheme, I do not consider that this outweighs my concerns about the proposal's scale, massing and design which would not be subordinate or a sensitive form of development that would lead to a coherent townscape through a good standard of design.
11. I therefore conclude that the dormer window would substantially harm the character and appearance of the area. This would not accord with Policy 11 of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, the SPD and paragraph 17 of the Framework; which together, among other things, seek a good standard of design that respects the scale and massing of existing buildings to create an attractive and coherent townscape.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR

² Paragraph 4.7, Appellant's Appeal Statement