

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2017

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V4630/D/17/3175752
102 Skip Lane, Walsall, WS5 3LR

- 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 Raj Rattu against the decision of Walsall Council.
 - The application Ref 16/1735, dated 14 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a hip-to gable loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal property was extended further to the receipt of planning permission for two storey side and single storey front and rear extensions in 2005¹.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an extended two storey detached dwelling. It is located in a residential area, close to the corner of Skip Lane and Park Hall Road.
5. The area is largely characterised by the presence of other detached dwellings, set back from Skip Lane, which in this location is a dual carriageway, behind front gardens and driveways/parking areas. The appeal property, like its neighbours, has a large garden to the rear and this backs on to gardens of properties along Park Hall Road.
6. Dwelling styles vary significantly and many houses in the area appear to have been extended and/or altered. Notably, the width of plots and the presence of side extensions has resulted in houses being located close to one another, with only small gaps in between.

¹ Ref: Application 04/0578/FL/H4 allowed on appeal 10/02/2005.

7. However, during my site visit, I noted that the presence of grass verges, garden hedges, trees and planting all combine to provide a pleasant sense of greenery as one travels along Skip Lane close to the appeal property. These features also provide for a sense of spaciousness, as does the presence of many gable roofs, creating gaps between otherwise tightly developed dwellings.
8. The proposal would introduce a gable roof by extending above the existing side hipped sections of the roof to existing ridge height. This would introduce volume and significantly reduce the gap between the appeal property and its neighbours at roof level. This would be detrimental to the area's spacious qualities. Whilst, during my site visit, I observed there to be other examples of gable roofs, these tend to be original gables located in areas where the relationship between the roofs of neighbouring properties is different to that of the proposal the subject of this appeal.
9. In addition to the above, the proposed development would also include a dormer to the rear roof slope. I find that the proposed scale and location of the dormer would result in a large and boxy feature. This would combine with the gable element of the proposal to add such significant volume as to dominate the appearance of the host property, leading it to appear "top-heavy" and disproportionate.
10. As a result of the above, the proposal would draw attention to itself and whilst the harm arising from this would be lessened due to the presence of mature trees to the rear of the property, it would add a degree of harm to that identified above.
11. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to the Framework, to Black Country Core Strategy (2011) policies CSP4, ENV2 and ENV3, to Walsall Unitary Development Plan (2005) policies GP2 and ENV32, and to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance, "Designing Walsall" (2013), which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

12. I note that one of the reasons for refusal refers to the possible presence of bats. Bats are a protected species and it is essential that development takes account of any impact on their roosts or habitats. This is a matter that might appropriately be addressed via a condition, but so doing would not reduce the harm to local character identified above.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR