
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2019

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/D/19/3233850

207 Hunts Cross Avenue, Liverpool L25 9NB

- 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 and Mrs Huxley against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref 19H/1064, dated 12 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension to side carry out alterations to roof to change from a hip to a gable, erect dormer extension and install rooflights to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of the development as set out on the Council's Decision Notice. This is more concise than that contained on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Hunts Cross Avenue is a residential road, primarily comprising two-storey, semi-detached dwellings. Although some have been extended, the generally consistent and uniform design of dwellings on the road makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. In particular, hipped roofs are the prevailing roof form along this stretch of the road.
5. The appeal property has previously been extended at first floor level. The lowered ridge line and hipped roof of the existing extension ensures that it is read as subservient to the original dwelling and reflects the prevailing roofscape on the road.
6. The proposed alterations would create a full gable on the flank elevation of the property, which would have a ridgeline that continues through to the original ridgeline of the dwelling and the adjoining property, 209 Hunts Cross Avenue. This change in the roof form from a hip to a full gable would fail to reflect the prevailing roofscape along this stretch of the road and would appear as an unduly prominent and incongruous feature, particularly when travelling along the Avenue in a southerly direction.

7. Furthermore, the lack of any set back in the rear elevation of the first-floor extension and resultant lack of any drop in the ridgeline would result in the extension failing to appear subservient to the original dwelling. Whilst the size of the extension is not out of keeping with the dwelling, its design is. The style of the resultant dwelling would be completely altered and create a visual imbalance between the appeal property and No 209 and fail to reflect the other properties in the streetscene, further highlighting its incongruity. I note that the original symmetry between the pair of properties has already be reduced through the extension of each property. However, the original hipped roof form is still clearly evident.
8. I have been referred to other properties that have been extended that do not have a set back elevation or a lowered ridgeline. However, they retain the hipped roof form of the host dwelling and therefore are not directly comparable to the proposal before me, which would not.
9. I note there are gable ended properties within the vicinity of the appeal property, on the opposite side of the road. However, these are clearly designed as such with each property in the pair of these semi's reflecting each other and creating a pleasant symmetry between them.
10. I have also been referred to a number of properties in Liverpool that have had hip to gable extensions. During my site visit, I had the opportunity to view many of these properties. Those properties that were granted a certificate of lawfulness would have been considered under a different procedure than the appeal proposal, which was the subject of a planning application. In respect of the others referred to, I do not have the Council's consideration of the planning applications for these extensions or the planning history of the properties. Therefore, I cannot be certain that there are any direct comparisons with the proposal before me that weigh in its favour. Nevertheless, some of the properties referred to, particularly those on Melbrooke Road, form pairs of semi-detached properties, with each property in the pair having a gable extension, therefore retaining the symmetry between the pair. Therefore, this is not directly comparable to the appeal proposal as the adjoining property has a hipped roof. In any event, I do not consider that the presence of poor design justifies any further detriment to the character and appearance of the area.
11. I find therefore that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to saved Policy H8 of the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2002, which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that house extensions respect the character of the existing dwelling and adjacent properties. Furthermore, it would fail to comply with the guidance set out in the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1, which provides advice on side extensions.
12. I have not been presented with any development policies that specifically prohibit hip to gable extensions. However, such proposals must nevertheless satisfy saved Policy H8 of the UDP.
13. I have considered the Council's argument that the grant of planning permission would set a precedent for other similar development. Whilst each application and appeal must be assessed on its individual merits, I can appreciate the Council's concern that approval of the extension could be used in support of such similar schemes. Allowing this appeal would make it more difficult to resist further planning applications for similar development, and I consider that

their cumulative effect would exacerbate the harm which I have described above. Although my decision on this appeal does not turn on this matter, it adds some weight to my conclusion on this main issue.

Other Matters

14. I acknowledge the appellants' wishes to extend the property to provide additional living accommodation for their family. However, I do not find that such matters outweigh the harm the proposal would have to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR