
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2019

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/19/3230695

4 Devonshire Road, Sheffield S17 3NT

- 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 Iqbal against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 18/04322/FUL, dated 15 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 18 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormer, two storey rear extension and single storey rear and side extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property, 4 Devonshire Road (No. 4), is a two-storey detached house of a simple design with a tiled roof with gable ends, located close to the corner of Devonshire Road and Abbeydale Road South (A621). It has been built in what was originally the rear gardens of the adjacent pair of semi-detached properties, 2 Devonshire Road (No. 2) and 286 Abbeydale Road South (No. 286). The three properties are sited close to one another and the garden of No. 4 tapers to accommodate the rear amenity space of No. 286. The back of No. 4 is stepped, so that the part of the house closest to the boundary with No. 2 and No. 286 is narrower than the main house with a foreshortened roof plane. Because of this, when viewed from Abbeydale Road South and the bottom of Devonshire Road, the house appears asymmetrical and deceptively narrow.
 4. The properties along Devonshire Road are stepped in height, rising up the hill. The ridge of No. 4 is higher than that of No. 2 and No. 286, but significantly lower than the adjacent three-storey properties on Devonshire Road. As a result, the proposed increase in ridge and chimney height would not be readily apparent when viewed directly from the front of the property.
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5. However, the proposed flat roofed rear dormer would project from the raised ridge and extend across the roof, and despite the proposed set back from the eaves and gable ends, would be clearly visible from the street and from the neighbouring properties on Abbeydale Road South. When viewed from the side, the raised ridge height and dormer would add further to the unbalanced appearance of the house. It would appear top heavy and awkward, causing harm to the character of the area. Cladding in matching tiles would not be sufficient to overcome the harm, which would result from the size, shape and position of the dormer.
6. Although there may be many similar rear dormers throughout Sheffield, the development now proposed would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and is therefore unacceptable. It would be contrary to Policy H14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan 1998 and Policy CS 74 of the Sheffield Core Strategy 2009, which require high quality development which would respect townscape character, and design which is in scale and character with neighbouring buildings. It would also fail to comply with the detailed guidance in the Supplementary Planning Guidance note (SPG) – Designing House Extensions, which in Guideline 2, seeks to ensure that dormer windows do not dominate the roof plane.

Living Conditions

7. The difference in height between the houses and their close proximity means that No. 4 currently appears as a highly prominent building when viewed from the backs of No. 2 and No. 286. This is particularly the case for No. 286 which has a small back garden, the boundary of which is close to the rear elevation of No. 4. The proposed raised ridge height and dormer would further increase the dominance of No. 4, particularly from No. 286. As a result, it would appear overbearing, increasing the sense of enclosure for neighbouring occupiers.
8. Given the close relationship between No. 4 and its neighbours, there is already a degree of overlooking between them from the first floor windows. Although additional overlooking has been reduced by the removal of the originally proposed Juliet balcony, the addition of a new large bedroom window at a high level would nonetheless increase the amount of overlooking into neighbouring gardens. Given the angles between the properties, overlooking would be mostly to the rear garden of No. 284, but the impact would be reduced by existing vegetation and outbuildings. Overall I do not consider that additional overlooking would lead to unacceptable harm.
9. I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers through the creation of an overbearing outlook. Whilst it does not conflict with UDP Policy H14 in this regard, it fails to comply with the detailed guidance in the SPG which requires that over dominance of neighbouring dwellings should be avoided.

Conclusion

10. I have found that the appeal proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Morgan

INSPECTOR