
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2019 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

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

Decision date: 06 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/D/19/3237749

4 Central Avenue, Eccleston Park, St Helens, L34 2QP

- 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 Andrew Conchie against the decision of St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2019/0424/HHFP, dated 6 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a front extension and two dormers to the rear roof plane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Andrew Conchie against St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Appeal Procedure

3. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of No 4 Central Avenue and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached dwelling, located within a predominantly residential area. It is set back from the highway behind a driveway and front garden. Permission is sought for a two-storey front extension and dormers to the front and rear.
6. The appeal site is located within the Eccleston Park Residential Character Area, as defined in the Supplementary Planning Document, Residential Character Areas, 2010. Key characteristics of this area include dwellings which are set back from the highway and are of varied architectural styles.

7. St. Helens Supplementary Planning Document, Householder Development, 2011, provides guidance for household extensions and notes that front extensions should be a subordinate addition to the original dwelling and roofs should be pitched to match the original roof. In particular, it notes that a two-storey front extension would be significantly more prominent than a single storey extension and, as such, is not normally permitted.
8. The site is slightly elevated above the highway therefore the host dwelling is highly visible in the street scene. Whilst it reflects some of the characteristics of the Eccleston Park Character Area, it appears to have undergone significant alterations, particularly to the form of the roof, prior to the designation of this area. Nevertheless, the modest, symmetrical appearance of the front elevation is still apparent and bay windows remain a feature of the building. Therefore, it makes a neutral contribution to this residential character area.
9. The proposed front extension would project forward of both the front wall of the dwelling and the bay windows and would extend over two and a half stories. Due to its scale and overall massing, this proposal would fail to read as a subordinate addition to the building. Further, the impact of its scale would be exacerbated by the extensive use of glazing, including uncharacteristic triangular shaped glazing at the gable, and the elevated height of the eaves in relation to those of the existing building. In addition, the size and position of the extension would erode the definition of the two bay windows. As such, the proposed front extension would have a jarring appearance, that would dominate the dwelling and consequently. As a result, the proposal would cause significant harm to the modest character and appearance of the property.
10. For the above reasons, the proposed extension, due to its substantial scale, design, massing and positioning to the front would be highly prominent and readily apparent. As such, it would be a visually intrusive and incongruous addition to the street scene.
11. My attention has been drawn to other front extensions within the area. However, there is no way of knowing, from the evidence, to which properties the photographs relate. Nor have I any substantive information on the approvals set out, such as application details or plans or the context in which they were allowed. I therefore give this matter limited weight in so far as it might be claimed to set any kind of "precedent" for other development.
12. Therefore, taking all the above into consideration, the proposed front extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of No 4 Central Avenue and the wider area. As such, it conflicts with policy GEN 8 of the Saved St. Helens Unitary Development Plan 1998 which seeks to ensure developments, amongst other things, respect the scale, design, character and appearance of the original dwelling and respect the character of its local setting. It would also be contrary to the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Documents as set out above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hannah Ellison

Appeal Planning Officer

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Susan Ashworth