



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2020

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

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

Decision date: 9 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/20/3258010

45 Harington Road, Formby, L37 1NT

- 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 Carl Childs against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2020/00967, dated 11 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as alterations to approved scheme with slight raising of main roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area and the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with particular reference to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No. 45 is a 2-storey house which fronts onto the eastern side of Harington Road. In 2019, the Council granted planning permission Ref. DC/2019/01297 for the erection of a 2-storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer at the property. The Council has confirmed that the approved scheme also involved raising the main roof of the property by 0.2 metres. I saw that the construction of the rear extension has commenced.
4. Nos. 47 and 49 Harington Road, which are situated immediately to the south of the appeal property, are 2-storey dwellings with side gables and plain pitched main roofs of similar height. Based on what I have read and seen, it appears likely that prior to the commencement of the work to modify No. 45, the height and roof form of No. 45 was directly comparable. To the immediate north of No. 45, a short row of detached bungalows fronts onto the eastern side of Harington Road. In my judgement, assisted by the slightly staggered building line along this developed frontage, the small approved increase in the height of No. 45 would not be noticeable and the retained regular rhythm of the roofs of Nos. 49-45, which is made more prominent by the step down to the row of bungalows, makes a positive contribution to the Harington Road street scene.

5. In contrast, the appeal scheme would involve the replacement of the existing roof, such that the ridgeline of the front roof slope would have a ridgeline 0.5 metres higher than that of the existing property, as shown on the appeal planning application plans, 0.3 metres higher than the top of the roof of the previously approved extension. In my view, this would be noticeably higher than the roofs of Nos. 47 and 49 and would disrupt the rhythm of the roofscape, to the detriment of the street scene. Furthermore, the proposal would include the addition of a flat roofed rear dormer, the roof of which would be level with the new ridgeline. It would conflict with the Council's *House Extensions SPD, June 2018* (SPD), which states that dormers should not go above the existing ridge.
6. Due to its height and width, extending across almost the entire width of the raised roof, the proposed rear dormer would appear unduly bulky, giving the rear elevation of No. 45 a 'top-heavy' appearance; much more so than the approved dormer. It would be visible not only from neighbouring properties but also from a number of vantage points along St Peter's Close to the east of the site. From there it would be seen together with the relatively plain roof forms of a number of Oakfield Drive bungalows and that of No. 47, in the context of which it would have a discordant and obtrusive appearance. Furthermore, the side elevations of the proposed dormer would be visible when approaching the site along Harington Road, from where it would have the appearance of a bulky and awkward addition to the roof. It would be particularly prominent when approaching from the north, with clear views above the neighbouring bungalows. I consider that it would amount to poor design.
7. In support of the scheme, the appellant has made reference to 3 planning permissions related to properties in the wider area, which he indicates involved roof lines being raised. Whilst I do not know the full circumstances of those cases, it appears that the associated permissions were granted well before the publication of the current SPD. Furthermore, 2 of the properties appear to be bungalows with first floor accommodation in the roof space and the other is a house on a corner site. The circumstances are not directly comparable to those in the case before me. In any event, each case must be considered primarily on its own merits.
8. I conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the local area. In this regard, it would conflict with the aims of Policy HC4 of *A Local Plan for Sefton, 2017* (LP) and Policy ESD2 of the *Formby & Little Altcar Neighbourhood Development Plan 2012-2030* (NP).

Living conditions

9. Unlike the neighbouring properties on either side of No. 45, the neighbouring properties to the rear have windows which face directly towards the proposed extension. However, in my view, they would be sufficiently far away to ensure that the proposal would not appear overbearing when seen from those facing windows.
10. The pattern of fenestration contained within the rear elevation of the proposed dormer would be the same as the approved rear dormer and so to my mind, it would be unlikely to have any greater impact on the privacy of neighbouring residents.

11. I conclude that the effect of the appeal scheme on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with particular reference to outlook and privacy, would be acceptable. In this regard, it would not conflict with LP Policy HC4 or NP Policy ESD2.

Other matters

12. The appellant has indicated that the proposed increase in the height of the property would be necessary in order that the proposed loft space would have sufficient headroom to be used as habitable space compliant with the Building Regulations. Nonetheless, whilst I understand the appellant's desire to add living space to his property, in my view, the benefits of the scheme in that regard would not outweigh the harm that the proposed scheme would cause to the character and appearance of the local area.

Conclusions

13. The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residents would be acceptable. However, in my judgement, neither this nor any other matters raised would be sufficient to outweigh the harm that the scheme would cause to the character and appearance of the local area and, on balance, it would conflict with the Development Plan taken as a whole. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR