



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 December 2020

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/D/20/3261003

53 Ashtree Grove, LIVERPOOL, L12 0PL

- 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 Colin McCue against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref 20H/1601, dated 8 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - ii) whether the proposal would provide a safe and suitable access.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located within a modern estate of two storey houses in a suburban area. The appeal concerns 53 Ashtree Grove (No. 53), which occupies a corner plot, fronting onto a short cul-de-sac which branches off from the main part of Ashtree Grove.
4. The pair of semi-detached houses of which No. 53 forms part, is of an asymmetrical design, with the appeal property occupying the larger of two front gables on the building. The design of No. 53 and its adjoining neighbour differs from those properties which surround it, but is replicated a number of times around the estate.
5. The House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance note 2001 (SPG) requires that extensions be subordinate in scale to the host dwelling, in order to ensure that they harmonise visually. Whilst the design of the appeal property is different from many typical semi-detached houses, the principles in the SPG still apply.
6. The extension would be more than half of the width of the existing dwelling, so would not meet the requirements of the SPG. I note the appellant's

comments that this is necessary to avoid a long and narrow space, but the width of the proposed extension, combined with the lack of any set back at ground floor level or reduction in ridge height, would mean that the proposal would not appear subservient to the host dwelling. Despite the proposed set back at the upper floor level, the proposal would fail to respect the existing separation and prominence of the front gable, which is a key design feature of this pair of houses.

7. The host property has a continuous ridgeline, but dropped ridgelines are common on other extensions on the estate, including on the adjacent pair of semis on the cul-de-sac. I note the appellant's comment that the ridgeline could be lowered, which would help the proposed extension to better harmonise with the host dwelling. However, I have assessed this proposed in accordance with the submitted drawings which do not show any such reduction.
8. The proposal would involve removal of the existing side outbuilding, but this is of modest height, and its location behind a boundary hedge means that it is not a prominent feature in the streetscene. The outbuilding would be replaced by the side elevation of the proposed extension, which would be a large and featureless wall. The side of the existing house already faces the main frontage of Ashtree Grove, but the proposal would bring this elevation much closer to the back of the pavement, in a prominent corner location. I acknowledge that there is no clear building line, and that a limited set back would be retained, but the presence of such a large, high wall in close proximity to the footway would appear overbearing and obtrusive within the streetscene.
9. The proposal would incorporate materials to match those on the existing house, and would respect the pitch of the roof, but this would not be sufficient to overcome the harm to the character of the area which would result from the scale, siting and height of the proposed extension.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Saved Policy H8 of the City of Liverpool Unitary Development Plan 2002 (UDP), which requires in part i) that the scale and design of extensions respects the character of the existing dwelling and adjacent properties. There is further conflict with the detailed requirements on house extensions in the SPG.
11. The Council has made reference to conflict with emerging Policy H8 of the draft Liverpool Local Plan. This policy reiterates the detailed guidance in the SPG, so although it has not yet been adopted, I have given these considerations significant weight in this appeal.

Access

12. The Council's highways officer has raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on visibility at the junction, but the appellant has provided a diagram which appears to show that the 2.4 metre sight line would be maintained. Ashtree Grove and the cul-de-sac which the appeal property fronts onto are quiet residential roads with low traffic speeds, and the presence of parked cars means that drivers and other road users need to take care. Given the

characteristics of the junction, I am satisfied that even if the proposal were to impede slightly on the visibility splay, the proposal would not result in any significant concerns about the safety of road users.

13. I conclude that the proposal would provide a safe and suitable access. In relation to this main issue, I have found no conflict with Saved UDP Policy H8, the detailed guidance in the SPG, or emerging Local Plan Policy H8.

Conclusion

14. Whilst the proposal would be acceptable in respect of highway safety, this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area which I have identified. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR