



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2022

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st March 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/C4615/D/21/3283961

9 Drew Crescent, Pedmore, Stourbridge DY9 0UX

- 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 Mrs H Hart against the decision of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P21/0307, dated 16 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a predominantly residential area and comprises a semi-detached 'Mucklow' style dwelling, a characteristic feature of which is their low-rise cat-slide roof, where the steep sloping roof meets the eaves level of the ground floor. Whilst there are a number of detached properties in Drew Crescent, the majority are semi-detached Mucklow dwellings, most of which remain largely unaltered save for some porch and window details. Drew Crescent is also on an incline rising up from Drew Road, such that the cat-slide roofs are particularly exposed and visible, as is the case of the appeal property. As a result, the uniformity of house design with their distinctive cat-slide roofs positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area, and give Drew Crescent a strong identity.
4. The proposal would involve a modest first floor side extension to enlarge an existing bedroom and install an ensuite bathroom. The new roof slope would be the same as the upper part of the roof, and the extension would be set back a little. However, the distinctive cat-slide roof would be removed. As the appeal property is the downhill-dwelling of the pair of semis, the altered elevation and roof slope would be the elevation most visible as one approaches up Drew Crescent. The small set-back would not mitigate against this, or sufficiently retain the ground floor element of the cat-slide roof to ensure that it remained visually dominant. Matching materials or high quality workmanship and detailing would not overcome this concern.

5. As a result, the extension would be out of keeping and would diminish the property's contribution to the street scene. It would detract from, and significantly harm, the character and appearance of the area and would erode the local distinctiveness of the prevailing Mucklow house design in Drew Crescent. It would also unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings, although there is nothing to require semi-detached dwellings to be extended in the same way at the same time.
6. Accordingly it would be contrary to Policy ENV2 of the Black Country Core Strategy and Policies L1 and S6 of the Dudley Borough Development Strategy. These collectively seek to ensure that new development is of an appropriate design in the context of its setting and positively contributes to the character of the area and local distinctiveness, even in areas of lower density suburban development. It would also be contrary to advice in the Council's Planning Guidance Note 17 – House Extension Design Guide that requires development to relate to its surroundings and avoid the loss of distinctive architectural features.
7. The appellant draws my attention to a number of extensions to Mucklow dwellings. I saw that 57 Drew Crescent has an unsympathetic first floor extension. The first floor extension at 39 Drew Crescent bears more resemblance to the appeal proposal. However both properties are on, or near, a bend in the road and do not form part of a linear row of houses that the appeal property occupies. The Council confirms these extensions do not benefit from the appropriate permissions. Their presence does not therefore set a precedent.
8. The appeal example at 8 Wrekin Road¹ is in a different part of Pedmore some distance away and hence has a different context. That decision was made a number of years ago and before the current Dudley Borough Development Strategy was adopted in 2017, although the Black Country Core Strategy of 2011 is still in use. In any event, all decisions turn on their own planning merits and the particular circumstances based on the evidence before those inspectors at the time.
9. I find none of the examples are therefore directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me, which I must consider on its own merits. The examples, do however, illustrate how local distinctiveness can be compromised and eroded and serve to reinforce my view that the appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the property and the area.

Conclusion

10. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. For the reasons given, I conclude the appeal should not succeed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal ref: APP/C4615/D/14/2220637 dated 5 August 2014