The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/22/3301577
28 Worley Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 5NS

- 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 Ben Moult against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
- The application Ref 5/22/0707, dated 15 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2022.
- The development proposed is the erection of a front and rear dormer extension with ground floor modification.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a front and rear dormer extension with ground floor modification at 28 Worley Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 5NS in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 5/22/0707, dated 15 March 2022, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey, mid-terrace dwelling of the late Victorian era within a predominantly residential area. It addresses Worley Road along which properties are mostly traditional in style with some variety in the type, scale and general appearance of buildings.

4. The site falls within the St Albans Conservation Area (CA), which covers a large area. In the vicinity of the site, the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset largely derives from the historic buildings within it, many of which are attractively designed. Along Worley Road in particular, the similarity in architectural style and the materials of buildings gives the townscape of the CA a coherence and consistency, which adds to its character and appearance.

5. Like most properties along Worley Road and nearby streets No 28 is identified in the Council's Conservation Area Character Statement for St Albans (CACS) as a locally listed building. This designation reflects the positive contribution made by No 28 to the heritage value of the CA. The CACS notes that many of the properties along Worley Road have dormers and accommodation in the roof space, which was evident at the site visit. I saw that existing dormers on

properties near to the site were varied in size, design and position, and that many were sizeable and prominent features of the host building.

6. The new rear dormer would be a significant built addition. It would be noticeably wider and larger than some dormers at the rear of other properties close to the site. That the roof of the proposal would appear almost flat due to its shallow pitch would accentuate the scale and bulk of the new structure.

7. Nevertheless, this element of the appeal scheme would be set well back from the edges of the host roof slope. With a good expanse of rear roof slope still visible, and ample space around the new addition on all sides, the proposed rear dormer would appear as a proportionate addition. Taken together with the use of appropriate external materials, as proposed, the design, size and general appearance of the new rear dormer would be acceptable. It would respect the domestic scale and traditional character of the host building.

8. Views of the new rear dormer would be limited given its position at the back of the property and generally away from public view. It would be glimpsed from the gardens of the properties on either side of No 28 at an oblique angle and from some distance. From these directions, upward views of the new dormer would be obscured to different extents by the built form of the host building, the terrace and existing boundary features and vegetation. As a result, only parts of the new dormer would be evident and seen against the varied rear profile of the terrace and the rear dormers on properties on either side. In that context, the new dormer would not appear overly large, dominant nor would it draw the eye as an uncharacteristic addition.

9. The Council raises no objection to the rest of the appeal scheme, which includes a new front dormer extension, different sized openings in the rear façade, a rooflight on the roof of the ground floor rear projection, and the removal of a short chimney stack. The new front dormer would not look out of place with several examples of a similar nature along Worley Road. The other changes proposed would be modest in scale and unobtrusive. I, too, find these elements of the proposal acceptable.

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to several large dormers on properties in the local area with photographs and some details provided. While I have taken each of these cases into account, it is a central planning principle that each proposal should be assessed on its own merits, which I have done.

11. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm the character and appearance of the local area. It would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and the positive contribution of the appeal dwelling to it. Accordingly, there is no conflict with Policies 69, 72, 85 or 87 of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review. These policies aim to ensure that new development achieves a high standard of design, is compatible with the original building, and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.

12. It would also comply with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to achieving well-designed places and in conserving and enhancing heritage assets such as conservation areas. Additionally, there would be no conflict with the statutory duty. This duty requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, which I have done in this instance.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is imposed to require that the external materials match those of the existing building, as proposed.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs 101, 102, 201, 202, 301, 302 and 303.

3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.