

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2023

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/D/23/3318257

1 Southfield Road, Liverpool, L9 8AU

- 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 Jane Coker against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref 22H/2716, dated 4 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single storey extension at rear and side with integrated garage, a porch to front, a hip to gable roof extension, a dormer extension at rear and installation of roof lights at front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey extension at rear and side with integrated garage, a porch to front, a hip to gable roof extension, a dormer extension at rear and installation of roof lights at front at 1 Southfield Road, Liverpool, L9 8AU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22H/2716, dated 4 October 2022, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. Firstly, the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Southfield Road and the surrounding area; and secondly, the effect of the proposed rear extension on the living conditions of occupiers of 45 Dove Road with respect to light and outlook.

Reasons

3. Southfield Road is a residential street of similar, mainly semi-detached, traditional dwellings. Most of these have a two storey front bay and at the end of the street closest to the appeal dwelling, hipped roofs. About halfway along Southfield Road the roof design changes to gable ended semi-detached pairs. These continue into Westfield Road at an angle of 90 degrees and are visible from the appeal dwelling.
 4. The appeal dwelling lies on a large corner plot close to the junction between Southfield Road and Dove Road. This street is characterised by more varied dwellings, including, close to the appeal dwelling and its semi-detached pair (45
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Dove Road) a terrace of smaller houses which ends in a gable adjacent to No 45.

5. At the time of my site visit the proposed extensions were substantially complete. The Council raises no objection to the proposed porch and I agree this is acceptable. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the roof extension and the single storey extensions.
6. The roof extension includes the alteration of the original hip to a gable end and the addition of a rear box dormer. From the street the most noticeable change is the hip to gable alteration. This results in the shape of the roofs of the semi-detached pair no longer matching but in view of the presence of other gable ended dwellings nearby it does not appear incongruous in the street scene. Neither does it detract from the character or appearance of the pair where different colour roof tiles and other architectural differences already make them distinct from one another. When viewed from the rear garden the dormer, although large, is set in from the gable end, up from the eaves and sits below the ridge, such that the original roof form can be discerned. Overall, I find it an acceptable addition, not dissimilar to many dormer extensions commonly seen on similar dwellings.
7. Turning to the single storey side and rear extension, at the side this is stepped to retain a noticeable gap between the boundary fence and the extension. The front section which has a shallow, hipped pitched roof comprises a single garage and is in keeping with the original dwelling in terms of scale and materials. Set back by some 3.75m, the extension widens but the degree of set back and remaining gap to the boundary means it does not appear overwhelming or otherwise incongruous when viewed from the street.
8. The rear extension, which is about 4m in depth, extends across the rear elevation of both the original dwelling and the side extension meaning that, overall, it is almost twice the width of the original dwelling. It has a flat roof with a parapet which is some 4m in height. The extension has been carefully designed so as to be an attractive addition which, despite its size, is in keeping with the original dwelling. Owing to the size of the plot which widens towards the rear, and the corner location the extension sits comfortably within it. This, coupled with the sense of balance it provides at ground floor to the roof dormer, ensures that the extensions, taken as a whole, whilst large, complement the host dwelling and do not appear disproportionate or otherwise overwhelming when seen from the surrounding area and especially when seen from the public realm.
9. It is concluded on the first main issue that the proposed extensions would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Southfield Road or the surrounding area. In consequence they would comply with Policies UD1 and H8 of the Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP), adopted 2022. Taken together and amongst other things, these expect house extensions to take into account local grain and pattern of development as well as the form, scale, proportion, materials, colours and tones characteristic of the area, such that extensions are of a high quality of design that matches or complements the style of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

10. The Council also refers to its Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1: House Extensions. It is not clear what status this document carries or when it was produced. I have taken it into account as a material planning consideration. The proposed extensions broadly comply with the guidance in respect of character and appearance and in the case of the appeal dwelling, which is atypical due to its corner location and large, widening plot, I do not find the limited conflict unacceptable.
11. Turning to the living conditions of occupiers of 45 Dove Road, the rear extension lies on the shared boundary between the two dwellings. The side elevation is some 4m deep and about 4m high and lies within a short distance of the closest ground floor opening. This comprises a glazed double French door with glazed side panels which is assumed to serve a habitable room. The window furthest from the shared boundary serves a kitchen. The dwelling sits on a generous plot and the rear elevation faces southeast. The plot widens towards the rear, providing a spacious and open garden.
12. The appellant has submitted a daylight and sunlight study for the proposed extensions. The study is based on the various numerical tests laid down in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice, 3rd Edition' by P J Littlefair 2022. Whilst this is not an adopted planning document, I consider that it provides useful guidance and I give it significant weight as a material planning consideration.
13. Although the appeal dwelling lies to the southwest of No 45 the daylight and sunlight study demonstrates that there would be no loss of daylight distribution to affected windows and whilst there would be some loss of vertical sky component this would be modest and comply with the BRE guide.
14. In terms of sunlight, the most significant loss would be to the glazed double French doors closest to the proposed extension. Nevertheless, the BRE standard would be met at all times of the year. Some loss of sunlight would also occur to the kitchen window but remaining sunlight would clearly exceed the BRE levels set out in the guide. In terms of the large garden, although some additional overshadowing would occur at certain times of the day, the majority of the garden would be unaffected by the proposed extension and would continue to receive existing levels of sunlight.
15. The Council does not provide any evidence to substantiate its view that the extension would significantly reduce natural light reaching the windows and outdoor space at No 45 or to make the validity of the appellant's sunlight and daylight study and its conclusions that BRE standards are met less likely. I therefore find that the proposed extension would have an acceptable effect on daylight and sunlight reaching No 45.
16. The proposed extension would be clearly visible from rear windows in No 45 and would be particularly noticeable from the French doors. However, its limited depth of some 4m compared with the extensive shared boundary as a whole and the generous, wide, south-east facing rear garden would ensure an open outlook. I acknowledge that the extension as built is a high and prominent feature on the shared boundary and lies close to the French doors. Nevertheless, the orientation of the rear windows would draw the eye beyond and away from the side elevation of the extension. Therefore, whilst the

extension results in some additional sense of enclosure to one side, the wider outlook from the rear of No 45 would not be significantly compromised if the development was allowed to remain. Overall, I find that although the extension would be clearly apparent from No 45, such views would not be oppressive or overbearing.

17. The non-attached neighbour at 3 Southfield Road has raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposed side and rear extension on outlook from that property. However, owing to the distance of separation, in particular from facing windows which may serve habitable rooms, I agree with the Council that there would be no significant loss of outlook from No 3.
18. It is concluded on the second main issue that the proposed rear extension would have no materially harmful effect on the living conditions of occupiers of 45 Dove Road with respect to light or outlook. In consequence, it would comply with Policy H8 of the LP and the National Planning Policy Framework. Taken together, these expect new development to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users such that no significant reduction in the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers occurs. In particular, extensions must not result in a significant loss of light/overshadowing or an overbearing or over-dominant effect on habitable rooms or outside amenity space for neighbours.
19. A third party raises a number of other matters. These relate to noise and disturbance during construction as well as issues not related to this appeal including the effect of an outbuilding which does not form part of the appeal proposal. None of these matters alter or outweigh my findings on the main issues.
20. Turning to conditions, since the development is substantially complete a commencement condition is not necessary. Neither is a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans or in materials which match the original dwelling. The Council does not suggest any other conditions and I agree that none is required.
21. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR