
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C4615/D/23/3321633

298 Albermarle Road, Kingswinford DY6 8TA

- 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 S White against the decision of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P23/0168, dated 3 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2-storey side elevation extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. While the appellant has described the proposal as in the above heading, the Council has additionally referred to elevational changes including new windows and doors. From my inspection of the plans, the Council's description more fully reflects the development sought. I have proceeded on that basis.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling with the first-floor accommodation within the roof space served by dormers at the front and rear. It stands within a group of four similar pairs that address the same side of Albermarle Road within an estate style residential area within which buildings vary in type, style, and scale.
5. The new 2-storey side addition would be set back from the main front wall with the ridge line set below that of the host building. The materials would match those of the existing dwelling and the pattern of windows and doors would be in keeping with the style of the appeal property. As such, the proposal would comply with some of the advice within the Council's Planning Guidance Note 17, *House Extension Design Guide* (PGN17). Although somewhat dated, PGN17 remains a relevant consideration in this case.
6. Nevertheless, the proposal would significantly add to the scale of the host building and result in a larger property with wider front and rear elevations. By elongating the front and rear dormers to cover part of the new roof, the

proposal would visually accentuate the width of the new 2-storey elevations. Due to its considerable scale, width and elevated position, the front dormer, as proposed, would also be a sizeable and prominent feature in the principal elevation of the dwelling when seen from Albermarle Road. In these views, the extended front dormer would draw the eye as an overly large and dominant feature in the finished dwelling notwithstanding its position mostly set in from the edges of the host roof.

7. There would also be an incongruous detail with the base of part of the new front dormer set at eaves level just above the proposed entrance door. I appreciate the difficulty of setting the entire extension back from the main front wall whilst also placing all the new front dormer well above the eaves. However, the submitted design would appear unconvincing because part of the enlarged front dormer would appear unusually taller and more substantive in-built form than the rest of the same structure.
8. When seen from the road just in front of the site, the proposal would add disproportionate scale and width to the existing dwelling and its design would appear contrived. In doing so, the appeal scheme would markedly contrast with and seriously imbalance the pair to which it belongs, as the attached counterpart to No 298, which has a single storey side addition, largely retains its original form above ground floor level. As the only obvious example of such development in the small group to which No 298 belongs, the proposal would be an obtrusive and discordant addition to the street scene and the local area. Although I saw a variety of houses and bungalows in the area surrounding the site, it is within the short row of similar dwellings that No 298, as proposed to be enlarged, would be visually 'read'.
9. The appellant considers that the rear dormer could be enlarged through the exercise of permitted development (PD) rights. While that may be the case, it would be smaller than the proposal and confined to the existing roof slope. As such, a PD compliant scheme is not directly comparable with the proposal and planning permission is sought for the development as a whole. Consequently, I attach only limited weight to this consideration in support of the appeal.
10. Reference is also made to various extensions and alterations made to properties in the vicinity of the site, notably at 100 Tunstall Road, with some details and photographs provided. From what I saw, this example serves to demonstrate that changes made to a dwelling that are clearly visible from the road can have a very significant effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene to which it belongs. It does not persuade me that the proposal, which would be a visually disruptive and uncharacteristic feature within the locality, should therefore be permitted.
11. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. Therefore, it conflicts with Policies ENV2 and ENV3 of the Black Country Core Strategy, Policies L1 and S6 of the Dudley Borough Development Strategy and PGN17. Together, these policies and guidance promote high quality design and seek to ensure that development is of an appropriate form, scale, and mass, and that it preserves if not enhances local character. It is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework which states that developments should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

12. Once complete, the proposal would provide valuable additional living space including a first-floor bathroom on the same level as the bedrooms, unlike the existing dwelling. I also appreciate that the internal layout of the dwelling and the need to achieve sufficient head height has limited the design options particularly in relation to the dormers. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified on the main issue.

Conclusion

13. Overall, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.
14. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, including the absence of objections from others, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR