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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2024

**by B J Sims BSc (Hons) CEng MICE MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/V4630/D/23/3332967**

**141 Whetstone Lane, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0EZ.**

- 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 Ms D Miles against the decision of Walsall Council.
  - The application Ref 23/0752, dated 7 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2023.
  - The development proposed is the erection of two-storey side, front and rear extensions with single-storey front and rear extensions.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

### Procedure

2. The original plans were amended during the processing of the application. On inspection, building works to the appeal property were ongoing.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, this decision is made with reference to the versions of the plans on which the refusal of the application was based, noting that the Plan listed as 2023-07-01 is in fact mis-numbered 02 and 2023-07-06A is listed by the Council as superseded but clearly shows the proposed boundary wall design and I therefore take it into account.

### Description

4. The appeal property comprises half of a semi-detached pair of two-storey houses with No143, fronting Whetstone Lane between a small shopping parade to the south and playing fields to the north.
5. The proposed development would include:
  - i. two-storey front extensions and single-storey front porch and garage extensions;
  - ii. two-storey side extension;
  - iii. two-storey and single-storey rear extensions;
  - iv. loft conversion having a rear-facing dormer and two front rooflights;
  - v. 1m high, raised decking with stairs to rear garden with a 2.2m high, side boundary wall adjacent to the playing fields;
  - vi. a 0.6m high, front boundary wall;
  - vii. a side wall to the forecourt boundary with No143 having piers 1.2m high with railing inserts; and
  - viii. and a 1.8m high, side wall to the forecourt boundary with the adjacent playing fields to replace the existing fence.

## **Planning Issues**

6. The third reason for refusal refers to the pillar and railing boundary wall between the two forecourts but I see no objection to this component of the development.
7. On consideration of all aspects of the appeal proposals and the written representations, I find that this case turns upon a single main issue of the effect that the several proposed built extensions would have on the character and appearance of No141 Whetstone Lane and its semi-detached neighbour, in the context of the wider street scene.

## **Reasons**

8. Although both Nos 141 and 143 are already extended, with No141 having a flat-roofed ground floor projection to the rear and No143 a full-width glazed rear extension, the pair retains its essentially simple overall appearance, in particular when viewed from the front.
9. In marked contrast, the front extensions would present a complex combination of roof shapes over a forward-standing front elevation at odds with the current building line. This would be adverse to the present relatively harmonious appearance of the pair, detrimental to the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and its neighbour.
10. This effect would be compounded by the rear extensions and the very large roof dormer. No141 would be made to look top-heavy by the dormer, compared with No143 and, although the extensive glazing to the kitchen-diner would in some way complement the rear extension of No143, the overall impact of the additional gables would be an even more unbalanced appearance at the rear than at the front.
11. Overall, this conglomeration of rather ill-matched additions would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the architectural character and visual appearance of No141 Whetstone Lane and of the pair of semi-detached dwellings as a whole.
12. Even though these two dwellings are an individual feature, separated from other purely residential properties, the proposed development would still have a damaging effect on the wider street scene, due to its incongruous appearance.
13. For these reasons the development would run counter to the thrust of relevant development plan policies, which, consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, require good quality design to contribute positively to place-making and local character. These include saved Policies CSP4 and ENV32 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policies ENV3 and GP2 of the Black Country Core Strategy.
14. I recognise the commitment of Ms Miles to extend and improve this family home and such family desires and needs are material to planning. The internal layout would apparently serve this purpose well.

15. On balance though, and in conclusion, I reach the overall judgement that the substantial objection I have identified to the external appearance of the property, that would result from this particular design, significantly and demonstrably outweighs any such benefit in this case, and that this appeal must fail.

*B J Sims*

INSPECTOR