
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 March 2024

by Mark Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G4620/D/24/3336913

47 Peak House Road, Great Barr, Sandwell, Birmingham B43 7RY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Jamie Bruton against the decision of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/68655.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'front extension, double side and rear extension'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2023. I do not consider in this case that this raises any matters that require me to seek any further representations from the parties and I am satisfied that no interests have been prejudiced in this regard.
3. The Council's Delegated Report and reason for refusal do not raise concerns with the proposed extensions to the rear of the property. I have no reason to disagree with that assessment based on the evidence before me and my observations of the site. I have therefore confined my assessment to the proposed front extension and roof alterations.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal building is a two storey detached dwelling on the eastern side of Peak House Road within a residential area. In common with other properties on this road, the appeal property is set back from the road behind a garden and driveway. It is constructed in red brick with a tiled hipped roof and includes bay windows below a gable feature to the front elevation.
6. The property is situated in a linear row of similar inter-war detached and semi-detached dwellings characterised by hipped roofs, projecting gables and two storey bay windows. Although many have been extended, this side of the road exhibits a strong sense of uniformity which contributes to the character of the area. In contrast, there is a more varied built form on the other side of the road, where there are examples of more modern properties.

7. The alteration to the roof of the property from a hipped roof to gable ends would fundamentally change its character and appearance. It would be a dominant addition to the host property and disrupt the largely uniform roofscape on this side of the road which is characterised by traditional hipped roofs.
8. The proposed two storey front extension would be of substantial size and, whilst set down from the main ridge, would be an imposing feature to the front of the property. Whilst two storey bays are an established feature of the area, the proposed front extension would be a bulkier addition than these. It would interrupt the rhythm of the properties on this side of the road, which do not feature such two storey front extensions. Consequently, the roof alterations and front extension would detract from the character of the host property which would no longer integrate successfully with the other properties in this row.
9. I appreciate that design can be a subjective issue and that the scale of the development has been reduced since a previous application. Nevertheless, I find that the siting, scale and design of the proposal would fail to respond to local character. I also note that the proposed development would be constructed of matching materials. Positive though this would be, it would not make the size, siting or design of it acceptable.
10. Whilst hip to gable extensions have been carried out at 42 Peak House Road and 9 and 12 Gleneagles Drive, I do not have details of the planning history of these cases or the circumstances which led to their approval, and their surrounding contexts are different. The gable end at No 42 is screened by the hipped roof over the first floor side extension. Accordingly, these other cases are not directly comparable to the appeal scheme which I have assessed on its own merits.
11. I conclude that the proposal, due to its siting, scale and design, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies ENV3 of the Black Country Core Strategy (2011) and SAD EOS 9 of the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (2012) which seek to ensure that development delivers high quality design that is compatible with its surroundings.

Other Matters

12. Whilst I appreciate that the proposal would provide additional, improved accommodation for the appellant's family, that could be said of many domestic extensions. Moreover, I am not persuaded that the appeal scheme is the only approach to achieving the accommodation sought. Therefore, I attach limited weight to this factor and it does not outweigh the harm I have identified. Although the appellant is dissatisfied with the Council's handling of the planning application, this is a matter between the parties. I have been concerned only with the planning merits of the case. I do not disagree with the Council's assessment that the proposal would not harm the neighbours' living conditions. However, this does not outweigh my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the development would be contrary to the development plan. There are no other material considerations to suggest a decision other than in accordance with the development plan and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw - INSPECTOR