

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 16 May 2024

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/24/3339089
127 Humber Avenue, Coventry, CV1 2AU

- 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 Esco Property Ltd against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2023/0002225/HHA, dated 18 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and rear dormer extension in a modified form.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to a rear dormer extension in modified form.
2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted insofar as it relates to a single storey rear extension at 127 Humber Avenue, Coventry, CV1 2AU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2023/0002225/HHA, dated 18 October 2023 and the plans submitted with it so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted.

Procedural matter

3. At the time of the site visit I was unable to gain access to the appeal property. However, the occupier of 125 Humber Avenue allowed me to view the appeal property from the rear garden of that dwelling. From here I was able to see all that was necessary to enable me to determine the appeal.

Main Issue

4. There is one issue which is the effect of the proposed rear dormer extension in a modified form on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal dwelling is a mid-terraced house in an established street of similar dwellings. It and its neighbours are characterised by two storey rear outriggers and traditional pitched roofs. The proposed development comprises a single storey rear extension and an L-shaped roof dormer which extends over the rear slopes of both the main roof and that of the outrigger.
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6. The single storey rear extension had been completed at the time of my site visit. The Council raises no concerns regarding this development, and I agree it would be acceptable. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the proposed roof dormer.
7. An L-shaped dormer extension had been completed at the time of my site visit. This has been the subject of a previous appeal (ref APP/U4610/D/22/3307148) which was dismissed. The current appeal proposal includes alterations to the as-built dormer which the appellant suggests would make it acceptable. The dormer extension has been built up to the shared party wall with the adjoining property. It is set down from the main ridge and in from the eaves of the main part of the dwelling. This would not change.
8. However, the dormer over the outrigger would be altered from its existing form, which extends to the side eaves and is built up off the rear gable wall. The changes would result in the dormer being set back from the eaves by some 0.2m and in from the end wall by a similar distance. The original gable end would be reinstated and the wall rendered to match the rear wall below. A smaller window would replace the existing window in the end elevation of the dormer.
9. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document, Householder Design Guide, (SPD), adopted in 2023, expects extensions usually to respect the form, scale, architectural style and materials of the original building. More detailed guidance relating to roof extensions, set out in Principle 6, expects rear extensions to be of a proportionate scale and subservient to the main roof through appropriate set in from the sides and set up from the eaves. The guidance states that dormer extensions that wrap around two roof slopes are not normally acceptable due to their bulk and disproportionate appearance. The appellant suggests that as the guidance was adopted after the dormer was completed it should be used flexibly. However, it is the policy and guidance that is in force at the time a decision is taken that should be applied unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
10. Although the proposed alterations to the outrigger dormer would assist in providing visual separation from the first floor, the development would nevertheless remain a disproportionately large and bulky addition with only minimal parts of the original sloping roof being apparent. It would give the dwelling a top-heavy appearance, with the awkward design and appearance out of keeping with the original roof form. The dormer over the outrigger would emphasise the scale and bulk, adding to its incongruity and visibility in the surrounding area. This would detract from the architectural integrity of the property. Although not seen from Humber Avenue and partly screened by the outriggers at Nos 129 and 127, it would be clearly visible from the gardens of neighbouring dwellings and from dwellings to the rear in Welland Road.
11. The appellant notes that dormers larger than those indicated in the Council's SPD may be allowed under permitted development rights. This is a material consideration. However, it is not suggested and nor is it clear that the proposed dormer roof extension would fall within permitted development limits. This argument therefore carries limited weight and would not justify the proposed incongruous and unsympathetic development.

12. I saw that there are other rear box dormers on dwellings nearby. However, with the exception of a poor example at 129 Humber Road the planning status of which is not clear, I did not see any other L-shaped dormers that extended over the rear outriggers. This type of development is not therefore characteristic of the area.
13. It is concluded on the main issue that the proposed rear dormer extension in a modified form would have a materially harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. In consequence, it would conflict with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan, adopted 2017, and with the SPD. Taken together these expect all development proposals to respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards local identity and character as well as respecting the form, scale and architectural style of the original building.
14. Notwithstanding my conclusion on the main issue, as set out in paragraph 6 above, I find the single storey rear extension acceptable. This part of the proposal is clearly severable from the rear roof dormer extension and is physically and functionally independent of it. I therefore intend to issue a split decision in this case.
15. Since the single storey rear extension has been completed, I do not consider that any planning conditions are necessary.
16. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed only in part but otherwise dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR