

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2024

by L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/24/3344011

464 Prescott Road, Old Swan, Liverpool L13 3DB

- 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 Mr Mohammad Shahverdi against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 23F/2329.
 - The development proposed is to erect upper floor extension to provide 4no. flats and carry out associated external alterations to existing building and garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The original application was for six flats, but amended plans were submitted during the application process which reduced the number of proposed flats to four. I have therefore taken the description of development from the decision notice and the appeal form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an MOT and car repair garage on the corner plot at the junction of Prescott Road and Goschen Street. Prescott Road is busy, and the site falls within the Prescott Road East Local Centre. There are streets of two-storey terraced properties running off Prescott Road, including Goschen Street. In the nearby vicinity along Prescott Road are two and three storey terraces, many with commercial uses at ground level with residential over. There are larger industrial and retail units in proximity.
5. The appeal property has a flat roof. It does not follow the established building line, standing forward of the neighbouring terrace along Prescott Road. The building is in a poor state of repair, with facing bricks on the ground floor having been removed and concrete blocks left exposed. Two of the first-floor windows on the Prescott Road elevation are covered in wire mesh, with the

central window covered with plastic sheeting. On the Goschen Street elevation there is different coloured brickwork, exposed concrete blocks, a roller shutter door to access the garage, and one of the first floor windows is boarded up with a metal gate.

6. The design and the condition of the appeal building means that it makes a negative contribution to the street scene.
7. The proposed development would see the existing garage retained and refurbished, and an upper floor extension to provide four self-contained flats. The proposal includes the addition of a new habitable pitched roof and the introduction of dormer features to the Prescott Road and Goschen Street roof planes to accommodate additional residential space. The garage entrance would be retained along Goschen Street, while a new entrance for the flats would be created next to No 444 Prescott Road.
8. An appeal was dismissed for an earlier scheme at the site.¹ However, this was for a development which included 6 flats and incorporated a flat roof design. There are material differences between the two schemes, and I have considered this proposal on its own merits.
9. The proposal would incorporate a pitched roof, which would be more in keeping with surrounding properties than the current building and the previously dismissed appeal scheme. However, the proposal would introduce dormer windows to the roof planes which would front Prescott Road and Goschen Street.
10. The dormer windows would be relatively small scale. However, there are very few dormer windows in neighbouring properties. Prescott Road includes attractive blocks of terraces with properties with gable roof features at either end of the row, which provides interest to the street scene, and the rooflines in the vicinity generally follow a uniform pattern. This provides visual continuity and contributes positively to the character of the area. The dormer windows would therefore be a discordant and incongruous design feature, out of keeping with neighbouring properties and disrupting the pattern of development.
11. Furthermore, the windows in the properties along both Goschen Street and Prescott Road are generally uniform in size and are well aligned both in terms of individual properties but also in relation to properties along the street. This again gives a pleasant degree of consistency and enhances the street scene as a whole. In contrast, the proposed development's fenestration has no clear relationship with neighbouring properties, with windows at the first floor level being set higher than neighbouring dwellings, creating an imbalance and disrupting the pleasant rhythm of development. Furthermore, the windows in the proposal would not align well with each other. This would be inharmonious and again would be in marked contrast and untypical of surrounding dwellings.
12. I agree with the previous Inspector that the redevelopment of the appeal site with a three-storey building would not be unacceptable as a matter of principle. There are a number of three storey terraced blocks with commercial

¹ Appeal ref APP/Z4310/W/22/3301842

uses at ground level and living accommodation above, including the block on Prescott Road adjacent to the proposed development, only separated by the entrance to Goschen Street. The proposed development has reduced in scale and mass from the previous scheme to an acceptable degree, and its height, although slightly taller than the immediately adjoining properties, would not look out of character or untypical in the area. Moreover, the building in its current form is out of scale and unattractive, disrupts the urban grain and has a negative effect on the street scene and visual amenity.

13. However, the discordant dormer window features and unaligned fenestration would lead to the proposal having an awkward relationship with adjoining properties and the street scene as a whole.

14. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 (2022) which seek to ensure that development respects local character, including patterns of development such as rooflines and roofscapes.

Other Matters

15. I have noted the concerns raised by interested parties. However, as I have found the proposal to be unacceptable on the main issues, it is not necessary for me to explore these matters further.

16. The proposal would provide social, economic and environmental benefits, delivering four residential units in a sustainable and accessible location close to shops and services. It would also provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents. The proposal would be making effective use of land and would boost and widen the supply of homes to help address the housing shortage in line with the Framework.

17. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

18. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.

19. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR