



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2024

by Eleni Marshall BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G4620/D/24/3351719

18 Hickman's Avenue, Cradley Heath, West Midlands, B64 5ND

- 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 Sabir Sattar against the decision of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application reference is DC/24/69327.
 - The development proposed is two storey front/side and single storey rear extensions, raising of roof height, hip to gable roof extension, loft conversion, front/rear dormer windows (revision to approved planning permission DC/23/68851).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal in terms of over-intensification and the visual quality of the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two-storey detached dwelling standing within a residential area. The Council's description of the development, and the submitted planning history, note the proposal is a revision to approved planning permission DC/23/68851, however, no details of the existing planning permission have been provided. DC/23/68851 is simply described in the planning history as a proposed two storey side and rear and single storey front/side/rear extensions. The proposal which is the subject of this appeal is as described above within this decision letter insofar as it seeks permission for multiple extensions as well as extensions and alterations to the roof.
5. At the time of my site visit I found that the appeal site is visually prominent within Hickman's Avenue due to its siting. The host dwelling is sited forward of the building line of the adjacent row of terraced bungalows, to the northwest, meaning that within Hickman's Avenue itself the entire western side elevation of the host dwelling (noted on the existing elevation plans as the left side elevation) is visible. The positioning also allows views through the site between the adjacent bungalows and the host dwelling's rear elevation itself. Furthermore, at the time of my site visit, I walked around the back of the adjacent bungalows to the open space located to the north and note that views

of the host dwelling, the rear/of the roof, are available above the bungalows from within the public domain. The appeal site is located behind the building line of the adjacent, two storey, terraced row to the southwest which reduces the prominence of the appeal site on approach from the junction with Highland Road but as outlined I find the site is essentially prominently located within views from within the street scene and surrounding open space.

6. It is evident, from the planning history (albeit no full information has been provided as outlined) that the principle of extensions to the dwelling is acceptable, within reason, but it is a commonly accepted principle that extensions should be subservient to a host dwelling. The guidance within Supplementary Planning Document Revised Residential Design Guide 2014 seeks to resist poor quality domestic extensions which require planning consent that do not fit in visually or are clearly out of keeping with their surroundings by virtue of their scale and architectural design. The over intensification of individual dwellings where it is proposed to extend them to a scale that is considered unreasonable will also be resisted and extensions must be in proportion to the scale of the existing dwelling and street scene.
7. In this case, the raising of the roof height, hipped to gable roof extension and front/rear dormer windows would, cumulatively, result in significant alteration which I find would be visually incongruous in a highly visible location within the street scene and from surrounding, publicly accessible, land. The alterations at roof level would then be combined with front, side and rear extensions which would cumulatively leave the host dwelling illegible as a result of cumulative extensions which would fail to be subservient to the host dwelling. The cumulative proposals I would consider to be unreasonable and not in proportion to the scale of the existing dwelling. I do not find that the design, in isolation, could fairly be said to be poor but I do find that the design does fail to respect the existing proportions, character and appearance of the host dwelling as well as failing to consider its visual prominence within the context of the street scene as outlined above.
8. The planning system is acknowledged to seek to make efficient use of land, however, this should not be at the expense of design which would in this case result in over intensification and a detrimental impact of the visual amenity of the street scene as a result of the alterations – particularly at roof level. I note the appellant's comments with regard to the proposals blending with the existing architectural character of the area, however, I do not find, from my site visit, that the proposals within this appeal would be compatible with the character of surrounding dwellings within which it would be viewed.
9. Whilst it is stated that the project includes landscaping and aesthetic enhancements that would contribute positively to the street scene, other than drawings of the existing proposed dwelling itself, there is limited information as to landscaping but in this case, I do not find that landscaping would sufficiently enhance or mitigate the visual impact and inappropriateness of the cumulative proposals as set out even if secured by condition attached to any consent.
10. I acknowledge the appellant's willingness to engage in further discussions and make adjustments, however, this is unfortunately not possible within an appeal process. The appellant makes reference, within their statement of case, to four other sites stated to be examples of development which the appellant states are comparable to the appeal proposal. These include 19 Barrs Road, 45

Halesowen Road, 8 Mousesweet Lane, and 51 Bowling Green Road. Images of the sites in question have been provided, however, other than planning references for the first two sites, no further information has been provided which, in turn, limits my ability to assess any similarities or attribute weight to those decisions within the consideration of this appeal. Furthermore, I have no example or reference as to how the dwellings noted looked prior to said extensions. Each case should be considered on its own merits and, whilst consistency is key to maintaining confidence in the planning system, from the images provided, I do not find that the example sites stated are in a comparable setting to the appeal site nor that the other sites have been subjected to cumulative extensions and alterations at the level proposed within this appeal.

11. Overall, I find that the proposal would be contrary to the prominent characteristics, and prevailing built form, of the surrounding residential area. Cumulatively, the proposals would result in over intensification which would fail to respect the host dwelling resulting in the host dwelling being visually illegible as a result of over intensification. The appeal site is in a prominent location, widely visible within the immediate area, and the proposals would negatively impact upon the visual amenity of the street scene.
12. The proposal would be contrary to Policy ENV3 of the Black Country Core Strategy 2011 which seeks to deliver high quality design and Policy EOS9 of the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document 2012 which outlines that particular regard will be paid to how the development relates to the street, its relationship with the public realm and the nature and height of any buildings and their effect of the surrounding urban area. The policy also seeks to reject poor designs, particularly those that are inappropriate in the locality, for example, those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Marshall

INSPECTOR