



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/24/3347563

66 Eshe Road North, Crosby, Sefton L23 8UF

- 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 Mrs Margaret Healey against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/2024/00577.
 - The development proposed is erection of part two storey/part single storey extensions to the side and rear, a first floor extension to the rear of the dwellinghouse, dormer to the rear roof slope, following the demolition of the existing detached garage to the side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Subsequent to the Council issuing its decision the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. The amendments to the Framework do not affect the matters that are in dispute in the determination of this appeal. Therefore, in this instance, it has not been necessary to consult the main parties on the amendments to the Framework.
3. The description of the development in the banner heading is taken from the application form. However, the wording used on the decision notice and appeal form is *"Erection of part two storey/part single storey extensions to side/rear, first floor extensions and balcony with glass balustrade, and dormer extension to the rear of the dwellinghouse and French doors to the side of the existing two storey rear extension following demolition of the existing detached garage to the side"*. I consider this to be a more accurate description of the appeal proposal.
4. Whilst the description of development is extensive, the main parties agree that much of these works have been approved under a previous planning application¹. Moreover, I observed that these approved works have been completed on site.
5. It is therefore common ground between the main parties that this appeal relates solely to the aspects that have not previously been granted planning permission, which comprises of the proposed rear dormer, the proposed balcony with glass balustrade, and the proposed French doors at first floor level. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis.

¹ Council Ref: DC/2023/01659

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal relates to a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling on Eshe Road North, a long residential street. The appeal property has a pitched roof design and has recently been extended and altered, including side and rear extensions.
8. The street scene along Eshe Road North is characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings of varying appearance, with a mixture of traditional hip and pitch roof designs. The dwellings are set back from the road with generally low-level boundary treatments and planting to the front gardens, with the occasional mature street tree located within the footway. These features provide a strong suburban character to the street scene and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area in general.
9. The proposed rear dormer extension would be set up to the ridge height of the existing roof and bridge a gap between two projecting gable features at the rear of the property. As a result of its size and scale however, the proposed dormer would represent a visually large and bulky addition to the roof.
10. Furthermore, in combination with these existing projecting gable features at the rear, the proposal would significantly increase the visual mass of built development at roof level and result in multiple protrusions of varying height, design and style. Together this would create a cluttered and inharmonious roof plane that would be at odds with the traditional and simple roofscapes within the vicinity. The resultant harmful visual impact and prominence of the dormer would only be exacerbated by a section of it being set above the ridge height of one of the existing gable features at the rear.
11. I therefore find that the proposed rear dormer would result in an incongruous addition that would detract from the rear roofscape of the appeal dwelling and the adjoining property, to the visual harm of the area in general.
12. In coming to this view, I acknowledge the proposed rear dormer would be screened from views along the highway of Eshe Road North and it would also not be highly prominent from public vantage points along College Road. Nevertheless, the proposal would be visible from the rear garden areas of several neighbouring properties on Eshe Road North, as well as the rear gardens and rear elevations of a number of properties on College Road. From these locations the proposed dormer would be visually harmful.
13. My attention has been drawn to dormer extensions on properties within neighbouring streets. However, during my site visit I observed that these dormers are not visible from the appeal site and dormer extensions are not a characteristic within the immediate vicinity of the appeal property. Furthermore, the existence of other dormer extensions in the wider area does not justify the harm I have identified, and I have determined the appeal on its individual planning merits against the most up to date planning policies. As such I attribute limited weight to these other dormers, on neighbouring streets, in my determination of this appeal.

14. I note the Council's Officer Report raises no concerns in respect of the design and appearance of the proposed rear balcony, the balustrade and the installation of French doors at first-floor level. I see no reason to disagree with this assessment.
15. In view of all the above, I conclude that the proposed rear dormer would result in harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, the adjoining property, and the surrounding area. The appeal scheme is therefore contrary to the objectives of Policies HC4 and EQ2 of the Local Plan for Sefton (2017) where they require, among other things, that extensions and alterations to houses are of a high-quality design that complements and is in keeping with the dwelling and the surrounding area; and that development proposals respond positively to the character, local distinctiveness and form of its surroundings.
16. The proposal is also at odds with the guidance contained within the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2023), where it states that dormer extensions should not cause harm to the character of the area.

Other Matters

17. The appellant states that the additional bedroom created by the proposed dormer represents an efficient use of land. I have however limited evidence before me that an alternative extension scheme could not achieve additional space without having a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.
18. I note the submission includes a letter from a Consulting Engineer and Surveyor detailing the minimum volume and head height required to meet Building Regulations. This does not override the visual harm I have concluded the appeal proposal would have upon the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Conclusion

19. The proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, to suggest the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

R Major

INSPECTOR