



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2024

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/D/24/3348869

123 Blackmoor Drive, Liverpool L12 9EE

- 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 Andrea Wilson against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application reference is 24H/1156.
 - The development proposed is to erect first floor extension to side, hip to gable roof with dormer to rear, to change from bifold to sliding doors at rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The Council's reasons for refusal refer to Supplementary Planning Document Note 1. This reference appears to be incorrect because the rest of the evidence before me refers to Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1, *House Extensions*, (SPG1). I have proceeded on that basis.
3. On 12 December 2024, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework 2024) was published. The Framework 2024 does not raise any new matters that are determinative to the outcome of this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property is one of a pair of 2-storey, semi-detached houses within a predominantly residential area, wherein buildings are similar in age and style although differ in scale and general appearance, partly due to various extensions and alterations that have been carried out. The proposal is to enlarge and alter No 123 primarily at the side and at roof level using external materials largely to match those of the host building.
6. At the front, the new first-floor side addition would be noticeably set back from the front wall of the original house, to which SPG1 refers. The line of the existing ridge would also be carried over the proposed side extension at the same height terminating with a gable rather than a hip end. A significantly

larger property would result, with an extended 2-storey front elevation and a roof form that would differ to the attached property, which appears to retain its original 2-storey built form and hipped roof. When seen from the road, this arrangement would disrupt the symmetry to this broadly matching pair (save for some differences in their appearance due to the materials used) and cause an awkward imbalance to their front elevations. The proposed side extension would also set No 123 apart from other buildings along this section of Blackmoor Drive, including those on either side of the site, that mostly retain their original hipped roofs. In that context, the proposal would draw the eye as a discordant and obtrusive feature. It would therefore be an unwelcome addition to the local street scene of which No 123 forms part.

7. At the rear, the new dormer would be a sizeable addition covering much of the existing and new roof slope. The scale and bulk of the proposed dormer, coupled with its flat roof set just below ridge level, would cause it to appear as an overly large 'box like' addition. As such, this element of the appeal scheme would be a dominating feature in the rear elevation of the finished dwelling even with the full width ground floor rear extension in place. This impression would be evident from the rears of the properties on either side of the site.
8. I saw several examples of buildings in the local area with 2-storey side projections, gable ends or large rear dormers, including those to which the appellant has referred and provided photographs. From what I observed, and from the evidence provided, these existing extensions have respected the character and appearance of the host building and the local area with varying degrees of success. In some instances, these cases exemplify the harm to which I have referred and so do not set a desirable precedent. While these and other extensions have introduced some variety to the existing built form in the wider area, it is within the row of mainly hipped roof dwellings on this section of Blackmoor Drive that the proposal would be 'visually read'.
9. Reference is also made to the Council's decisions to approve extensions to properties on Arlescourt Road, Aldwych Road and Whinfell Road. From the limited information provided, it is unclear whether the circumstances leading to these decisions are the same or very similar to those of the proposal. In any event, each case should be assessed on its own merits, as I have done.
10. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, it is contrary to Policies UD1, H7 and H8 of the Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP) and to SPG1. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that extensions and alterations to dwellings match or complement the style of the dwelling and the surrounding area and take into account the pattern of development.

Living conditions

11. It is likely that the elevated position of the new dormer windows would lead to a greater level of overlooking of the rear gardens of the properties on either side of the site than would be possible from the first-floor rear windows of the existing dwelling. The Juliette style balconies, as proposed, would also signal the presence of the new dormer windows to the occupiers of these properties that could intensify a perception of being overlooked.

12. Nevertheless, in my experience, overlooking of this general type is a common characteristic of the relationship between dwellings that stand side-by-side in main built-up areas. While I recognise that the Juliette style balconies might encourage some people to loiter and look out of the new dormer windows, I doubt this would be a common occurrence.
13. To my mind, the loss of privacy due to the additional overlooking possible would not have a significant impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings. As such, the proposal does not conflict with LP Policies H7, H8 or SPG1 insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity. My favourable finding on this matter does not outweigh the harm identified in relation to the first main issue.

Other matters

14. I note that the appellant responded promptly to address the Council's initial concerns during the application process. Given the lack of feedback thereafter, the appellant feels that the informative attached to the decision notice, which states that the Council wished to work positively, proactively and in seeking solutions, is misleading and inaccurate. In assessing the options to refine the appeal scheme, I agree that lowering the height of the roof above the new side addition would bring the rear dormer, as proposed, into view within the street scene, which would be an incongruous feature. Others raise no objection, and I agree that the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers would not be adversely affected if the proposal were to come forward. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

15. Overall, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework 2024, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR