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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2025

**by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 17 April 2025**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/D/25/3363015**

**29 Albert Close, Hackney, London E9 7EX**

- 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 Claire Pollard against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
  - The application Ref is 2024/2670.
  - The development proposed is a loft conversion, including raising the ridge to create head height.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

### Reasons

3. Amongst other things, and in general terms, the Hackney Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2009 ('HSPD') states that roofs make a significant contribution to an area's character. It advises that roof conversions should not depart from, or disrupt, the existing roof form; and that dormers should be positioned within the existing roof slope, and set in from the sides and down from the ridge; but that, where a large number of rear box dormers already exist in the vicinity, a larger dormer might be acceptable.
4. The host comprises a mid-terrace property, whose front elevation faces Albert Close, and whose rear addresses Northiam Street across a garden. It and 27 Albert Close ('No 27') form a similar two storey pair, with a pitched roof, and a rear face which is set back from the taller three storey attached properties either side.
5. The proposed loft conversion would include a dormer window to the rear, whose flat roof would project horizontally from the property's ridge, which would be raised by 300mm. It would extend across the full width of the host's pitched roof, and it would be set up only very slightly from its eaves. Consequently, it would have a very substantial, rectilinear bulk. This would give the resultant property a top-heavy, three storey flat-roofed form, which would be markedly at odds with its attached neighbour at No 27. Its discordant appearance would be exacerbated by its windows, which would fail to align with those in the floor beneath, and one of which would be significantly wider.

6. Notwithstanding the building's set back from the highway, the proposed dormer would be prominent in views from Northiam Street. Whilst it would be seen next to the taller building at 7 Northiam Street, it would be at odds with its gabled form, resulting in an awkward junction between them. As there are no other properties facing this part of Northiam Street with similar dormer windows, or similar nearby buildings with a prominent flat-roofed form, the proposal would harm this streetscene.
7. I observed a large rear dormer at 5 Northiam Street, whose side wall is visible from a part of that road to the south, but it faces Albert Close, and it is not typical of either streetscene. Whilst the appellant says that there are many similar box dormers of a conventional design on homes across England, they are not common in the vicinity of this site.
8. The dormer would be faced in matching materials and, as evidenced at pages 13 to 16 of the appellant's statement, ridge heights vary nearby. However, for the above reasons, the form, bulk and design of the scheme would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and this area. It would therefore fail to comply with the advice in the HSPD, and it would conflict with those parts of Policy LP1 of the Hackney Local Plan 2033 (2020) and Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) which require the highest architectural and urban design quality, which responds to local character and context, having regard to matters such as scale, appearance, shape, form and proportions.
9. The scheme could result in improved energy efficiency, although I have little evidence of that. Whilst it would also provide the appellant and her family with a third bedroom, and more usable and practical space, that private benefit would not outweigh the significant harm that it would cause.
10. For these reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

*Chris Couper*

INSPECTOR