
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by A J Mageean BA (Hons) BPI PhD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 2nd December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/16/3157628

3 Rotherwood Close, Higher Bebington, Wirral CH63 5RG

- 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 Mr Robert Evans against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/16/00351, dated 10 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016
 - The development proposed is first floor extension above existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building and local area.

Reasons

3. Rotherwood Close is a short cul-de-sac of six detached dwellings. These red brick buildings are of simple, reasonably consistent design, with attached single storey double garages with front facing gables which project considerably forward of their front building lines. Whilst there is some variation in plot size, the buildings themselves are mostly positioned regularly in relation to the street scene. There is a gradual falling west to east gradient, meaning that the properties at the head of the cul-de-sac to the east are sited at a lower level than those at the start. The Close itself is without pavement, of generous width and is flanked by mature trees which provide a pleasant backdrop.
 4. No 3 Rotherwood Close is located near to the start of the cul-de-sac, and is visible as part of the primary frontage row of five dwellings located on the northern side of the road. The proposed development would raise the ridge height of the existing garage roof and place a single dormer projection on the western roof slope, filling much of its width. The dormer would allow the creation of a master bedroom and would have two windows serving the bedroom and landing area. It would have a slightly pitched roof set just below the main ridge height and would be set in from both the front garage gable and eaves.
 5. This dormer extension would be a visible addition to the local street scene which, as noted above, currently presents a reasonably harmonious and
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coherent arrangement. Whilst the appellant states that the additional height to the garage roof would be no more than 1m, this would create a change in roof gradient which, along with the addition of a lengthy dormer extension, would disrupt the regularity of the local street scene. My view is therefore that this would be an unwelcome addition to this frontage.

6. I accept that the appellant has sought to create a design which builds on the present form and appearance of the dwelling, and in this way he has sought to minimise its visual impact. I also accept that the current proposal represents a revision of an earlier proposal, and in this way a compromise solution has been sought. Whilst noting that this is a reasonably private road and that this extension would only be visible in local views, its form and location would nevertheless be harmful to the local character of this area.
7. The appellant makes the point that such a dormer extension would be permitted development if added to the rear of the dwelling. However, such additions do not enjoy such planning freedoms when fronting highways. Furthermore, local policy as set out in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan 2000 (the UDP) Policy HS 11 and the Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions (the SPG), both refer to the need to control front dormers which would have an adverse effect on the character of the street. Whilst the appellant makes the point that the dormer would not be front facing, it would nonetheless appear as part of the front, public face of the property.
8. I recognise that in some situations front dormers can be appropriate and that they have been accepted elsewhere. I also accept the appellant's points that design can be a subjective matter and that the wider area around the cul-de-sac comprises a range of architectural styles. However, I have judged this proposal in relation to the impact on its immediate environment which displays a significant degree of uniformity.
9. The appellant also refers to a previous approval for a front extension to No 9 Rotherwood Close being granted in 2010. I do not have the full details of this case before me though note that it has not been implemented and has now expired. I noted on my site visit that No 9 is located at the end of the main frontage row of properties and is sited at a notably lower level than the others. In this way it is less visible in the local street scene and any addition would be correspondingly less intrusive.
10. In the light of the above reasoning this proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the building and local area. It would conflict with the UDP Policy HS 11 and the SPG, both of which seek to prevent front dormer extensions which would have an adverse effect on the character of the street, and also the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to secure a high standard of design.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should fail.

AJ Mageean

INSPECTOR