
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

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

Decision date: 11 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/17/3171647

14 Norbury Avenue, Higher Bebington, CH63 2HJ

- 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 Michael Minshall against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/16/01541, dated 25 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a double storey side extension-amendment of 1 metre only.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. Nos. 14 and 16 are semi-detached houses each situated on a corner site on opposite sides of Norbury Close, at its junction with Norbury Avenue. The proposal involves the addition of a 2-storey extension to the side of No. 14.
 4. The Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions, 2004* (SPG) confirms that great care is needed in the design of extensions on corner plots, as the plots often provide an open appearance with greenery, and are prominent from both streets.
 5. The side elevations of Nos. 14 and 16 are each set back from the side boundary they share with Norbury Close. In the case of No. 14, the appellant has indicated that the set back is around 4.45 metres. I consider that, due in significant part to those setbacks, the entrance to Norbury Close has an open appearance. The gap between those dwellings affords a wide view from Norbury Close of dwellings on the opposite side of Norbury Avenue and, from a number of vantage points, beyond to planting within the grounds of a school. These characteristics of the arrangement of built development and landscaping contribute positively to the street scene.
 6. The guidance provided by the SPG concerning 2-storey side extensions on corner plots includes that the width of the extension should not be more than
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half the width of the side garden/plot between the property and the adjacent highway.

7. There have been 2 previous planning applications for the addition of a 2-storey extension to the side of No. 14. The first involved an extension which would have extended to within a short distance of the side boundary of the site, contrary to the SPG guidance. This, amongst other reasons, resulted in the dismissal of an appeal, Ref. APP/W4325/D/16/3146082, against the Council's refusal of planning permission for that development. The second planning application, which involved an extension 2.225 metres wide, in keeping with the SPG guidance, resulted in planning permission Ref. APP/16/00981.
8. The proposed side extension would be set back sufficiently from the alignment of the front elevation of the house so as not to conflict with its entrance porch at the front corner of the dwelling and the window above, which wraps around the front corner. However, the proposal would be 3.225 metres wide and would reduce the gap between the side of the house and the adjacent highway to around 1.225 metres. The approved scheme would diminish the open appearance of Norbury Close and close off wider views from a number of vantage points along it, to a noticeably greater extent than the approved scheme. It would harm the character and appearance of the street scene and, in my view, its impact in this respect would not be reduced through the use of render, rather than brickwork, in the parts of the external surfaces of the proposal. Furthermore, the width of the proposed side projection would conflict with the SPG guidance. I acknowledge that SPG is not part of the Development Plan and that it does not carry the same weight. Nonetheless, it has been adopted by the Council following public consultation and, insofar as it seeks to ensure that development responds to local character, promotes local distinctiveness and secures good design, it is consistent with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework). Therefore, I give the identified conflict with the SPG significant weight.
9. I conclude that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the street scene, contrary to the aims of Policy HS11 of the *Wirral Unitary Development Plan, 2000*, which requires the scale of extensions to be appropriate to the size of the plot in keeping with the aims of the Framework as regards good design.

Other matters

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of side extensions that have been added to dwellings on corner plots in the area, which do not comply with the SPG. However, based on the limited information provided, it is not self-evident that they are directly comparable to the proposal before me. For example, as observed by my colleague¹, No. 9 Norbury Avenue adjoins a short site access road to a school, rather than a residential street and so can be regarded as less sensitive to the adverse impacts of exceeding the SPG guideline concerning width of side extensions. Furthermore, it may be that the others were approved against a different planning policy background, prior to the publication of the Framework. In any event, each case must be considered primarily on its own merits and, in my judgement, the existence of those other extensions would not justify harmful development of the appeal site.

¹ APP/W4325/D/16/3146082.

11. Whilst I have had regard to the appellant's suggestion that the rooms provided by the approved scheme would be minimal, there is no evidence before me to show that such a development would be impractical or economically unviable. It seems to me to be unlikely that this would be the case, given that the appellant went to the expense of seeking planning permission for that approved development. Neither this nor any other matters raised are sufficient to outweigh the considerations which have led to my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

12. I conclude on balance, that the harm I have identified would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits of the scheme. It would not amount to sustainable development under the terms of the Framework and would conflict with the Development Plan. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR