



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2017

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/17/3179118

81 Wood Lane, Greasby CH49 2PX

- 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 Mrs Sandra Bailey against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/17/00184, dated 15 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 2 storey side extension providing accommodation for ground floor living/dining room & laundry and wc and first floor bedroom and dressing room and associated alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the appellant's first name as set out on the appeal form, as they have confirmed in writing that this is the same person as that set out on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a prominent two storey detached dwelling on the corner of Wood Lane and Glen Ronald Drive. The dwelling, despite its entrance being in the side elevation, principally addresses Wood Lane and its landscaped garden. This includes a hedgerow that wraps part-way around the site's flank boundary. A timber boundary fence extends along the side to the rear of the site. A row of leylandii runs next to and above the height of the side boundary fence from the dwelling's north-west corner to its rear boundary. To the south and east are two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings. To the north and north-west are bungalows. These dwellings are of a mixed scale, style and appearance. A mature tree is on the north side of Glen Ronald Drive opposite the site.
5. The Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 2000. UDP Policy HS11 has been saved, however they pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and I understand the Council are reviewing their draft Local Plan. Given the age of the UDP, the appellant opines that UDP Policy HS11 carries a limited weight. They also consider the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions (SPG), to be out-

of-date as it dates from 2004. However, with regard to Framework paragraph 215, UDP Policy HS11 does still form part of the Council's development plan. Furthermore, the policy is consistent with Framework paragraph 17 which seeks high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. The SPD is also consistent in this regard. Hence, I give them substantial weight.

6. The proposed extension's width would be considerably larger than half the width of the original dwelling's frontage. This would occupy the majority of the side garden's width, which at its widest point, measures roughly 5.5 metres. As such, the proposed ground floor would not accord with both bullet points in relation to extensions on corner plots in the SPG, even with its angled roof plane and the width of the first floor, which would accord with the SPG.
7. While, the criteria set out in the SPG are not, on my reading, mandatory, they do stem from the need to consider the specific character of the building and its context, which, in this case, is a corner plot. I consider that the scale of the extension in the appeal site's side garden would significantly harm the visual appearance and character of this spacious corner plot. This harm would be emphasised by the lack of any set back from the front elevation and the limited distinction between the ridge heights of the extension and the host building.
8. I observed during my site visit the bungalows to the north and north-west of the appeal site in particular. While, the properties next to Glen Ronald Drive are, at certain points, close to the boundary, they are a very different form of development that has a lower scale and massing. Although I agree that they have a very limited impact, the appeal scheme would not have the same effect. Hence, the proposal would not represent high quality design¹.
9. Setting aside this, the existing landscaping and boundary fence would, in part, screen the proposed extension. They would offer a limited benefit to views from the north-west and north-east. Additional planting is proposed next to the extension in an area which does not currently have any. This would be behind the boundary fence. The appellant considers that this mitigation could be delivered through an approved plans condition. However, there are no details of the precise number and size of the proposed planting, or any details of how the planting would be managed and maintained, so that it does form an effective screen as the appellant suggests. So, even if the planting would obscure the ground floor extension, there would be no certainty that it would take place or grow to the height shown. More importantly, I am not certain that such a condition would ensure the retention of this landscaping in perpetuity.
10. Notwithstanding this, modest positive benefits would stem from the extra living accommodation and the appellant's family remaining in the community. However, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest, and given the absence of any firm evidence about their ability to move house, I do not consider that these matters outweigh the significant harm identified.
11. I conclude that the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would not comply with saved UDP Policy HS11, the SPG and Framework paragraph 17; which jointly seek, among other things, the scale of extensions to be designed with care great, having regard to the size and context of the corner plot to secure high quality design.

¹ Framework paragraph 17

Other matters

12. I note there have been no representations received and that the appellant amended their scheme with a view to finding a solution with the Council. However these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified, and I have, determined this appeal in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations have indicated otherwise.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR