



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 1 December 2020

by Mr Andrew McGlone BSc(Hons), MCD, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/20/3260271

31 Hawthorne Drive, Pensby CH61 6UP

- 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 Adrian Powell against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/20/00725, dated 3 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a second storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The semi-detached appeal property is located within an area characterised by dwellings of a consistent type, scale, appearance and style. This comprises of a two-storey bay window, a narrow first floor projection above the front entrance and a single storey element to the side with a first floor set back to the rear of each dwelling. Collectively, this leads to a cohesive character and appearance.
4. The appeal scheme would be set down from the ridge line of the original dwelling and would in this regard be a subordinate addition to the host dwelling. Its design would also take cues from the host property. However, the proposed extension would not be set back from the first-floor projection above the property's front entrance which currently projects beyond the bay window. In doing so, despite its modest size, the proposal would not reflect the character and appearance of the host property or the surrounding area in terms of a first-floor element to the side being set back to the rear.
5. I note that 33 Hawthorne Drive has a characteristic first floor to the rear of its flank elevation, but the proposal would infill the air space to the side of the appeal property and result in the loss of the visual break between each pair of semis. The stated gap between the proposal and the first floor at No 33 would not prevent a terracing effect from being created, especially if the appeal scheme were to be repeated at No 33. This is realistic possibility and the situation could potentially be repeated for each semi-detached property nearby. This would erode the cohesive character and appearance that the properties collectively display, but it would exacerbate a terracing effect.

6. By setting a first-floor extension back it would simply reflect the front building line of the property either side of the bay window. The varied building line in this instance forms a positive part of the property's design. Hence, I do not agree with the appellant's point about the alternative.
7. The first-floor extensions at 23 and 51 Hawthorne Drive do not result in a terracing effect as they are both located at the end of a row of properties and next to a greater degree of space. There is also no first-floor side extension at 13 Hawthorne Drive. The context to 32 Hillfield Drive differs from that relating to the appeal property due to the wide variety of house types on Hillfield Drive. Added to this, a number of these have been extended. The decision at 251 Teehey Lane explains that this property lies in an area of varied character and appearance with a mixture of roof shapes, front gable projections and bay windows. The same variety is not present on Hawthorne Drive. Thus, the examples cited by the appellant do not alter my view about the appeal scheme.
8. Although changes have been made to permitted development rights to facilitate upward extensions, schemes do need to be well-designed and comply with local design policies and standards. The proposal would make efficient use of the airspace to the side of the property, but the scheme would not accord with local design policies, which are, despite their age, consistent with the design policies in the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to proposals to be sympathetic to local character and maintaining a strong sense of place. I also have no details of how the appeal property could be extended upwards in another manner whilst according with local design policies.
9. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed extension would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Conflict would be caused with saved Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions which jointly seek extensions to avoid the effect of terracing, where two storey side extensions are added to the sides of semi-detached houses of similar style with a consistent building line and ground level, unless they are set back.

Conclusion

10. While the proposal would not result in harm to highway safety or neighbours living conditions, these matters do not outweigh the harm identified. As such, there are no material considerations that indicate that a decision other than in accordance with the development plan should be taken.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR