

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 August 2021 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/W/21/3272787

The Lodge Holm Hill, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 7JA

- 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 Anthony Bergman against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/00115, dated 18 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is to construct a new 2- storey car port structure for storage purpose only.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. In the description of development above, taken from the application form and the appeal form, the appellant has applied for a two-storey car port. Although the Council has referred to the fence, which is shown on the plans and mentioned in the evidence and amended the description of development on the decision notice, there is no evidence before me the appellant has agreed to this change of description. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the proposal applied for by the appellant.
4. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). Accordingly, the parties have been provided with an opportunity to make submissions in respect of the publication. In this respect, I am mindful that neither the appellant nor the Council have made any further submissions regarding the revised Framework. However, in light of this re-consultation, I am satisfied that any references made to the revised Framework within this decision would not be unreasonable to the parties.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The host dwelling occupies a corner plot at the junction of Holm Hill and Vicarage Road and is a distinctive detached two storey dwelling. To the rear of the dwelling, accessed via Holm Hill is a garden area with an off-road parking space some distance from, and at a higher level than the dwelling.
7. Holm Hill is a narrow road characterised by mature vegetation giving the locality an attractive sylvan character with development largely set back from the road giving it a sense of openness and spaciousness. The appeal property with its garden adjacent to Holm Hill makes a positive contribution to this character.
8. The car port would be sited on land elevated above the host property and whilst lower in height than the dwelling, would as a result of its design and proximity to Holm Hill be an intrusive, dominant feature in the street scene which would detract from the spacious characteristics of the locality. The use of materials and design cues to match the host property would not mitigate the identified harm.
9. I acknowledge the appellant's desire to provide storage space and shelter for his car, however it is likely that such provision could be made without harm being caused to the character or appearance of the area. Limited weight is therefore given to this matter. The absence of harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers is a neutral factor which weighs neither for, nor against the proposal.
10. Given the above I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with the aims of Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (2000) which requires, amongst other things, that extensions should be appropriate in scale to the plot, taking into account the relationship to the boundaries and surrounding development. The scheme would also not comply with the Framework or the Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions which amongst other matters requires development to be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

11. The appeal site forms part of an area of biological importance in connection with its proximity to Caldys Hill. It is also within close proximity to Holm Hill LWS which contains habitats for statutorily protected species.
12. The proposed development would be constructed on an existing hard surfaced area and whilst the wider area may be used for foraging, it is unlikely that the site of the new car port would be used as such. Both the local wildlife group and Natural England have raised no objections to the proposal subject to suitable mitigation which could be controlled by planning conditions in the event that the appeal was allowed. On the basis of the evidence before me and what I saw on site I am satisfied that wildlife habitats and biodiversity would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. I therefore recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR