

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2021

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/21/3284126

5 Chorlton Grove, Wallasey Village CH45 8QG

- 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 S Catterall against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/00670, dated 1 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is for a loft conversion including dormer to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description above is taken from the application form. However, it is apparent from the Council's description on the refusal notice and the appellant's use of that description on the appeal form that the proposal also involves a dormer on the rear elevation. The reason for refusal expressly refers to the front dormer. In its Officer Delegated report the Council states that the rear dormer is acceptable in design terms. Having regard to the evidence before me I see no reason to disagree. I have therefore confined my assessment to the front dormer.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached two-storey dwelling located close to the junction of Chorlton Grove and Leasowe Road. Chorlton Grove is a residential cul-de-sac with a mixture of dwellings and bungalows, with most being semi-detached. The appeal property forms part of an asymmetric pair with a projecting ground floor bay window. Despite some variety in design and detailing of the properties, and that some have been extended, overall the street displays a relative uniformity. I saw some front dormers but they were not a characteristic feature.
5. The proposed development would involve the erection of a flat-roof dormer to the front roof slope. The dormer would be set-in a small distance from either side of the roof. The base of the dormer would be some distance away from the eaves of the main roof and the flat roof of the dormer would be set down a little lower than the roof of the dwelling. The dormer would have one wide

window with a large central light and two narrow side lights. The other window would be narrow and positioned above the narrow arched first floor window below it.

6. Nonetheless, the dormer would extend across most of the width of the roof slope, making it a large structure in relation to the size of the roof. The overly wide window in the dormer would accentuate the largeness of the dormer as a whole in relation to the property and size of roof and would make the property 'top heavy'. Furthermore, due to the alignment of the street and the property's location close to the entrance/exit of Chorlton Grove, the proposed dormer would be unduly prominent in the street scene. Overall I find the proposed dormer would cause harm to the property and the character and appearance of the area, which is predominantly free from dormer windows. The use of hanging tiles to match the main roof would not sufficiently mitigate against the size of the dormer.
7. The appellant refers to a number of properties in Chorlton Grove that have front dormer windows. I saw that the dormer at No.3 is smaller and set-in a substantial distance from the outer edge of the roof. The dormer at No.9 is smaller and, because the property is taller, more in proportion with the property and roof slope. Furthermore, both these dormers are on pairs of semis that are significantly asymmetrical, with both having projecting two-storey gable features, unlike the appeal property and its adjoining semi. As a result, these dormers are not as prominent on their roof slopes or in the street scene as a whole.
The dormer at 25 Chorlton Grove is similar in design and property type but has a different window arrangement, which reinforces my view about the proposed dormer. This property is located at the end of the road in the corner of the cul-de-sac. As a result, the dormer is read in a different street context and is less prominent. Nos.29 and 31 Chorlton Grove are a pair of semi-detached bungalows each with a small dormer. These dormers are sited adjacent to each other centrally and symmetrically within the combined front roof slope. 168 Leasowe Road is a detached dwelling on the main road some distance from the appeal property, hence occupying a different street scene. This dormer is much smaller in relation to the size of the roof slope and does not extend as far across the width of the existing roof, unlike the appeal dormer.
8. In response, the Council advises that these other dormers appear to have been in place for a significant amount of time and pre-date the Council's current guidance. In my view, these other flat roof dormers are of different sizes, on different design of properties and in different parts of the street scene, such that they are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal and do not set a precedent. In any event, I must consider the appeal proposal on its own merits.
9. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposed front dormer would be too large in relation to the roof slope in which it would sit and would in turn adversely harm the character and appearance of the property and the area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Unitary Development Plan Policy HS11, which states that dormers should be restricted to the rear, but seeks to ensure that all extensions are designed so as not to adversely affect the appearance of the property or the area in general. It would also be contrary to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for House Extensions which states that front

dormers will not be allowed where they would have an adverse impact on the character of the street scene or on the appearance of the dwelling.

Conclusion

10. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR