



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2021

by K Winnard LL.B Hons Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/21/3279588

Beau View 30 Oldfield Way Heswall CH60 6RH

- 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 and Mrs Thompson against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/00106, dated 18 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as new ground floor porch, first floor extension to the master bedroom including ensuite to the front and side elevations, new first floor bedroom to the rear over the existing kitchen and formation of new bedroom and living accommodation to the attic space which includes new dormers to the front and rear plus glazed balconies to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In July 2021, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). It replaces the previous version published in February 2019. The Framework represents the Government's up to date planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The circumstances of this appeal are such that it has not been necessary to seek comments from the parties on the revised Framework.
3. The development the subject of the appeal consists of a number of elements. The Council's concern relates to the front elements of the proposed development. I shall accordingly direct my assessment to these elements of the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property (No 30) is a detached property located along Oldfield Way, a residential road characterised by well proportioned detached dwellings. Whilst there is variety in the design of the dwellings, the area has a well balanced appearance and character of detached properties in a mature setting. Save for the flat roof single storey extension to the front of the property, No 30 is of a simple traditional design. The proposed development would involve substantial remodelling and extensions to the property with flat roof dormers in the attic roof space to accommodate living accommodation. Due to its height, tiered balconies and flat roof dormers the development would result in an unduly prominent front elevation. The bulk of the front extension and the staggered depth of the dormers would appear as discordant features and incongruous additions to the straightforward design of No 30.
6. I acknowledge that the properties on Oldfield Way are diverse in design and architectural form. However the introduction of the third floor living accommodation with flat roof dormers either side of a substantial front projection would introduce a feature not seen on Oldfield Way. I appreciate that the dormers would be stepped back from the front elevation. However this would emphasise an elongated roof appearance and would result in a property out of keeping with both the roof designs and front elevations found elsewhere on Oldfield Way. As such it would be visually discordant in the traditional development and sense of maturity found on the street and harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appellant has referred to a style of design with front balconies becoming increasingly popular in this area and has drawn my attention to other developments within the vicinity. I accept that there are other properties within the locality where there are front elevations with balconies. However those that I noted on my site visit were either within a group of similarly designed properties or sited set back from the road where views of the properties were not easily obtainable due to mature vegetation. Nor did I observe any examples where there were tiered balconies on the front elevation of properties. Accordingly, these developments do not justify the proposed development at No 30 which would otherwise be unacceptable.
8. I appreciate that this is a contemporary modern design and that flat roofs are a feature which have been accepted by the Council as appropriate in other developments. Whilst the Framework promotes innovative design it also indicates that it is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Nonetheless, due to its shape and height the development would be overly prominent and would be at odds with the prevailing character of the streetscene along Oldfield Way where there are no examples of a similar design.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed development would be visually harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly it would conflict with Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (2000) which states amongst other matters, that design matters such as the roof form shall match or complement those of the existing building, and which seeks to ensure that house extensions should be designed to have no adverse effect on the area in general. Nor would it comply with the Framework which requires development to be sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge that the proposal would modernise the dwelling and be of benefit to the appellant in providing enhanced family living accommodation and facilities to enjoy the views obtainable in this location. I note too that the Council does not raise any concerns with regards to the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and that there would be no direct overlooking of any properties from the balconies of the proposed development. However the absence of harm in these respects does not outweigh the findings I have made in respect of the effect of the proposed development on the appearance of the area.
11. Whilst there are no objections to the side and rear elements of the development, these elements are, in the main, not physically and functionally severable from the proposal. Therefore I do not consider that a split decision would be appropriate in relation to these particular elements.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. There are no other considerations which would outweigh this finding or the conflict with the Development Plan. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR