



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2021

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24TH January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/21/3278993

1 Redhouse Lane, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5ED

- 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 Rebecca Jackman against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/00436, dated 9 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is enlargement of existing dormer roof to side of property, external elevation changes and internal reconfiguration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow with a steep pitched roof and an existing small flat roof dormer window on one side. The cheeks of the existing dormer are tiled to blend in with the roof and the windows are brown UPVC to match those in the rest of the dwelling. The property is finished in a mixture of brick and render and has a flat roof extension to the side.
4. Surrounding dwellings are varied in terms of design and materials. Side and rear dormer windows of varying sizes and materials are common in the area and are visually prominent on Redhouse Lane. It is likely that many of these dormers were constructed under Permitted Development (PD) rights. Neither party has advised me whether or not the appeal property benefits from full PD rights and if so, what the fallback position would be. Unfortunately I am therefore unable to give this matter, which would be a material planning consideration, any significant weight in reaching my decision.
5. The proposed dormer would cover the majority of the existing tiled roof slope and would be finished in white render to match the white render also proposed to the front and side of the dwelling. The proposed window materials have not been provided on the application forms or plans, but would presumably be brown UPVC to match those in the remainder of the dwelling.

6. Despite being located on the side of the property the proposed dormer would, due to the orientation of roads and buildings in this area, be visually prominent in public views from Redhouse Lane itself and from other public roads close to its junction.
7. The bulk and scale of the dormer would significantly detract from the original design and character of the dwelling, unbalancing its front elevation and altering the appearance from the side to one of a flat roof dwelling. The use of three separate smaller dormer windows or even a smaller single dormer set further in from the edges of the roof slope, would be appear far more superior and attractive in design terms than the proposal currently before me.
8. Given the excessive scale and poor design of the dormer, together with its prominent location in public views, it would be harmful to the property and to the character and appearance of the area.
9. I conclude that the proposed dormer would be too large in relation to the roof slope within which it would sit and this would harm the character and appearance of the property and the area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan, which seeks to ensure that the scale of an extension does not dominate the existing building and that dormer windows are restricted to the rear and do not occupy the full width of the roof. It would also be contrary to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for House Extensions, which states that dormer extensions that unacceptably dominate the existing building or appear obtrusive in the street scene will not be allowed.

Other Matters

10. The appellant states that the council recently approved a similarly large dormer extension on a prominent corner plot nearby. As no further details have been provided I have been unable to consider this any further. In any event, I have considered this proposal on its own merits. I note the appellant's reasons for wanting to alter the property and in particular to relocate the staircase. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest that this could not be achieved in an alternative manner that would respect the design of the dwelling and its surroundings. The harm that would be caused would be permanent and is not justified by the appellant's circumstances. The reason for refusal does not relate to impacts on neighbours and accordingly the absence of any objections from neighbours is a neutral matter. I acknowledge the frustration caused by the failure of the council to work with the appellant in a positive manner in order to find a potentially acceptable solution and to avoid the need for this appeal. However, this is not material to my determination of the appeal and should be addressed via the council's complaints system.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR