



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2022

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21ST March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/22/3291638

33 Statham Road, Bidston CH43 7XS

- 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 Charlton against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/01911, dated 28 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is detached single storey brickwork store to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The detached single storey brickwork store to front elevation as referred to comprises a flat roofed outbuilding that was in-situ at the time of my visit in the position set out in the submitted plan. I determine the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is in an established residential area which is characterised by predominantly detached and semi-detached houses with gently sloping front gardens to the highway edge. The group of properties of which No 33 Statham Road (No 33) forms part are in an elevated position relative to the highway and have the appearance of detached houses linked via single storey garages. The majority of properties along this section of Statham Road have open plan frontages, although there is low fencing at No 33 and a taller side boundary fence adjoining the rear garden of a property facing Trueman Close. There are similar arrangements of taller side boundaries along the street, including where the group of properties meets those facing onto Lords Avenue.
5. The outbuilding subject of this appeal is located beyond the front building line of No 33. It adjoins existing hardstanding and lies adjacent to a timber fence on the side boundary which largely screens it from views when approaching from the Trueman Close junction. The outbuilding has a perpendicular orientation when compared with the main house and consists of brick walls with a flat roof above a white fascia board, with access provided by a roller shutter door. The base of the building transitions with the downward sloping land levels toward the road which emphasises the slimline profile and height of

its elevation closest to the highway edge and results in an asymmetrical appearance of the elevation containing the roller shutter door.

6. Saved Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted February 2000, indicates that proposals for house extensions will be permitted subject to all its listed criteria being complied with. The listed criteria, amongst other things, include the scale of the extension being appropriate to the size of the plot, the materials matching or complementing those of the existing building and, flat roofs being restricted to the rear or side of the dwelling and only acceptable on single storey extensions. The Wirral Supplementary Planning Guidance House Extensions (SPG), July 2004, also states that 'front extensions will clearly impact on the street scene and will rarely be acceptable on semi-detached properties, or detached properties in a row which are of a similar design and appearance, properties that are prominent within the street scene or where there is a definite building line'.
7. The aforementioned circumstances apply to the appeal proposal as there is a definite building line, albeit not uniform, along the surrounding group of properties. The houses are also of a similar design and appearance, notwithstanding a recent two storey side extension at No 33 and the addition of render to its front elevation. Although Saved Policy HS11 and the SPG do not specifically refer to front outbuildings, the proposal lies within the curtilage of and has a close relationship with No 33. As such it reasonably falls within the definition of a normal domestic adjunct and therefore, can be considered as an extension to the dwelling for the purposes of the policy and guidance. It follows that whilst the outbuilding is partly screened from some views by fencing which it sits against, it is still visually prominent in the street scene when approaching along Statham Road after the junction with Lords Avenue. From those public vantage points, despite the similarity of its brick walls to front elevations of nearby properties, the size, form and configuration of the outbuilding appears incongruous in its prominent location at the front of No 33 and is at odds with the pattern and form of development and open frontages nearby.
8. In reaching the above findings, I have taken account of the purpose of the outbuilding being intended as a bin/garden store in circumstances where the external amenity space at the rear of No 33 is somewhat limited by a splayed boundary and the presence of a rear conservatory. Nonetheless, the benefits of additional storage for the occupiers of No 33 and its potential to offset visual clutter that could arise from the alternative storage of bins on the hardstanding at the front of the property, does not justify the harm arising from the design and location of the outbuilding before me.
9. I conclude that the outbuilding has an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal, thereby, conflicts with Saved Policy HS11 of the UDP and the associated guidance in the SPG. The policy is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, requires developments to add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR