



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2023

by K Townend BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/21/3289158

8 Neville Road, Bromborough, Wirral CH62 7JE

- 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 & Mrs Beaumont against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/21/01363, dated 4 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is a second storey side extension and loft conversion with rear dormer.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. From the evidence submitted, and from my site visit, the proposed development has commenced. I have dealt with the appeal on a retrospective basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Neville Road is a residential street with pairs of semi-detached houses which have similar frontage designs, a consistent building line and alternating pairs of hipped and pitched roofs. These factors, taken together, contribute to the pleasant character and appearance of the street and the area. The appeal property forms one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with pitched roofs. The appeal proposal relates to a second-storey side extension and a dormer to the rear to facilitate a conversion of the loft.
5. Policy HS11 of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, Wirral Unitary Development Plan Written Statement, 2000 (UDP), at viii), requires the first floor of side extensions to semi-detached houses, which have a similar style and consistent building line, to be set back at least 1.5m from the common boundary; or at least 1m from the front elevation and 1m from the common boundary, or at least 2m from the front elevation.
6. The Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance, House Extensions, 2004 (SPG) is referenced in Policy HS11. The SPG states

that side extensions to semi-detached dwellings should be set back from the front of the dwelling by 1m and should have a lower ridge height.

7. The second storey side extension is set back 1m from the front of the original dwelling, but it is not set in 1m from the common boundary. Therefore, it does not comply with the criteria set out within Policy HS11 of the UDP. Furthermore, it does not comply with the SPG, in that the second storey side extension does not have a lower ridge height than the existing dwelling.
8. Both Policy HS11 of the UDP and the SPG set out criteria to prevent terracing, and to ensure that extensions are in scale with the original dwelling. Although the risk of terracing is reduced by the adjacent property, No.10, and its extension, having a hipped roof, there is not a significant gap between the No.10 and the appeal property. The existing extension at the appeal property and the extension to No.10 have resulted in a very small gap between the houses. Therefore, when viewed together the second storey side extension to the appeal property and the extension to No.10 have resulted in a terraced effect, to the detriment of the immediate street scene.
9. I acknowledge that the side extension is only different from the previous consent (APP/17/01176) in terms of the ridge height. However, the increase in the ridge height, and the associated lack of a visible break between the roof of the original and the extension, extends the width of the roof plane. This results in a noticeably unsymmetrical and unbalanced pair of dwellings with No.6 and limits the visual break with No.10. Furthermore, the side extension does not complement either the appeal property or the pair in that it introduces a new roof form with a raised eaves but matching ridge height. For these reasons, the side extension at the appeal property is out of scale with the original dwelling and does not maintain the character and appearance of the street scene.
10. Turning to the dormer, Policy HS11, at iv), requires dormers to be restricted to the rear of the dwelling and not project above the ridge, or occupy the full width of the roof. The SPG advises that, amongst other matters, dormers should be sensitively designed and seeks to resist dormers that dominate the existing building or appear obtrusive in the street scene. The SPG also advises rear dormers should be set in by at least 0.5m from the gable and party boundaries and set back at least 0.5m from the original rear wall.
11. Although the dormer extends across the roof of the side extension, as well as the original dwelling, this is the same as the previous consent (APP/17/01176). The dormer does not occupy the full width of the roof or project above the ridge and therefore it would comply with the criteria of Policy HS11. It is lower than the ridge height; set back from the rear wall; and set in a sufficient distance from the shared boundary with the adjoining property.
12. Notwithstanding that the dormer is not set in by 0.5m from the gable closest to No.10 and, as such, it does not meet the criteria in the SPG. As I saw, the dormer is only seen in glimpsed views from Neville Road and the surrounding area from Ambleside and Allport Lane. The dormer appears, from these public viewpoints and from the garden of the appeal property, to be set in from the edges of the roof-slope. The distance from the gable end is not immediately visible from any public viewpoints and the dormer does not appear visually obtrusive.

13. Consequently, whilst the dormer does not comply with some of the requirements of the SPG, it does not have a significant adverse effect on the appearance of the host property or the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, I do not consider that the dormer conflicts with Policy HS11 of the UDP. However, this does not outweigh the harm of the second storey side extension.
14. I conclude that the second storey side extension is contrary to Policy HS11 of the UDP which seeks to ensure that extensions do not dominate the existing building; are of an appropriate scale with the original dwelling and seeks to avoid terracing effect.
15. I also find that the second storey side extension is at odds with the SPG which requires house extensions to not over-dominate and to reflect the character and scale of the existing dwelling and the street; recommends a lower ridge line; and seeks to resist terracing. It is also contrary to the general design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other matters

16. The appellant has referred me to another appeal¹. However, from the evidence before me, that appeal related to a dwelling within an area with great variety in building design and roof shapes. Moreover, the description of the area, as being open with the properties set-back and with spaces between them, indicates that the referenced appeal is not in the same context as the proposal before me. As such the appeal is not comparable to the proposal. Moreover, I have dealt with the current appeal on the basis of the evidence before me.
17. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a dormer window on 13 Ambleside which is very prominent from the garden of the appeal property. This other dormer fills the full width of the dwelling and I also saw on my visit that it is prominent in views from the surrounding area. However, I do not have the precise details of the case and I cannot be certain why it was approved in this form. The dormer at 13 Ambleside does not, therefore, set a precedent for the appeal proposal.
18. The appellant refers to a lack of communication with the Council; however, the conduct of the Council does not affect my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I have found that the second storey side extension is contrary to the development plan, as a whole, and the Framework. There are no other material considerations that would indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Townend

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/W4325/D/19/3227380