
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2023

by Elaine Benson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/23/3324743

2 Colmore Avenue, Spital, Bebington, CH63 9NL

- 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 Brian Coulthard against the decision of Wirral Council.
 - The application Ref APPH/23/00357, dated 7 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The appeal property is a bungalow located on the corner of two roads. It is at the end of a run of comparable properties which have a ridgeline running front to back and a gable fronting Colmore Avenue. It is proposed to erect a dormer window on each side of the roof slope to form a loft conversion. The dormers would not extend along the entire length of the roof.
3. Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy HS11 indicates that dormer windows should not project above the ridge or occupy the full width of the roof. Detailed design guidance in the House Extensions SPG reflects this and also indicates that where they are acceptable, dormers should be 0.5m from the original end wall. The proposed dormer would not be set in by this amount. Whilst not in direct conflict with the other policy criteria set out above, both dormer windows would extend almost from the eaves to the ridge.
4. The proposal would result in an unbalanced and overly large and dominating roof element. It would create an incongruous, partially box-shaped building, harming the modest character of the bungalow. The development would also jar with the regular design of the adjacent bungalows. It would be out of character with the immediate context of the appeal property which I consider of prime importance.
5. Therefore, whilst some of the individual UDP policy criteria would be met, the scheme would be contrary to the overarching aim of Policy HS11 and its Reasoned Justification which, in summary, indicate that extensions should not dominate the original property or have an adverse effect on the area in general. The scheme would also conflict with the similar objectives of the SPG.
6. There are many properties with dormer windows in the locality, including on nearby Sheldon Close. However, the examples provided are predominantly

original features on properties of a quite different design to the appeal bungalow and set within a variety of contexts. Where dormers are later additions, they, unlike the appeal proposal, are of a modest scale and are set well within the roof planes. This is evidenced at the corner of Warren Hey and Poulton Road, a site which the appellant refers to. The example properties do not set a precedent for the appeal proposal which has been determined on its own individual merits.

7. UDP policy HS11 restricts dormers to the rear of dwellings. As the bungalow runs front to back and stands on a corner plot, any roof extensions would be seen from the road. Furthermore, given that many dormers face onto the road in the locality, an alternative, more modest loft conversion scheme may well be acceptable here. I am not therefore convinced that the appeal proposal is the only way to achieve the additional living space required. But in any event, any alternative schemes would be determined on their own merits.
8. I concur that the proposal would not result in harmful overlooking of adjacent properties. This is a neutral factor which does not justify permitting a proposal of unacceptable design. Support from neighbours is not a determining factor.
9. Having also had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. The proposal is contrary to the aims of UDP Policy HS11 and its Reasoned Justification and the SPG design guidance. There would also be conflict with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to create well designed places.
10. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR