



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2024

by T Bennett BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/24/3339524

1 Farndon Way, Oxtown, Wirral CH43 2NW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Emma Mills against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is APPH/23/01902.
 - The development proposed is two-storey extension and single storey extension to the front and side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have been made aware of the emerging Wirral Local Plan 2021-2037. As the policies are yet to be found sound, they carry limited weight in this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of 1 Farndon Way and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. 1 Farndon Way is a semi-detached dwelling with a small porch and attached garage to the side, within a large residential area. There are a variety of dwelling types, many with modest single-storey front and side extensions. However, two-storey front extensions are not a characteristic of the area. This feature contributes distinctively to the character of the area.
5. The proposed single-storey element of the extension would project 2.5 metres from the front elevation, with a 2 metre projection at first-floor. Given that properties in the vicinity do not have such an extension, it would appear as an incongruous and prominent addition, at odds with the prevailing character of both the host property and wider locality. The use of materials and roof form that reflect the host dwelling, along with properties to the north being sited at a higher elevation, would not sufficiently mitigate the prominence.
6. Given the sloping topography of Farndon Way, the adjoining property at No 1a is set lower than 1 Farndon Way. Consequently, the scale and forward projection of the two-storey extension would dominate the pair of semi-detached dwellings and would exacerbate the harmful effects of the proposal. This would be particularly noticeable, even considering the boundary treatment

and vegetation, on the approach from Townfield Lane and Picton Close, where the two-storey blank side elevation would be readily seen.

7. In coming to the above view, I have been mindful of the guidance contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance 11: House Extensions (2004) (SPG 11). This states that front extensions are rarely acceptable on semi-detached properties in a row of similar design and appearance or on properties that are prominent in the street scene or where there is a definite building line. Whilst there is not a definite building line within the street scene and despite the varied property styles, there is a shared commonality in appearance. Two storey front extensions are absent, and the appeal property is prominent in the street scene.
8. Moreover, SPG 11 sets out that porch extensions should not exceed 1.5 metres. Whilst the proposal is not solely for a porch, the ground floor element would visually read as one and is annotated as such on the submitted plans. I therefore find SPG 11 in respect of porches, relevant to the proposal. The proposed depth would not be in accordance with the SPG in this regard either.
9. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of 1 Farndon Way and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (2000). This policy, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure house extensions do not dominate the existing building. It would also conflict with SPG 11 for the reasons set out above and the overarching design aims of the Framework.

Other Matters

10. The appellant considers the scheme as urban densification, aligning with a brownfield first approach which they point out is adopted within the emerging Wirral Local Plan, and the Framework. Whilst noting this, Paragraph 128 of the Framework also requires decisions to take into account the area's prevailing character and the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful places. This is also re-iterated in Section 12 of the Framework. Consequently, being mindful of this, and considering the very modest amount of development proposed, such benefits in terms of land re-use would not outweigh the harm I have identified regarding the character and appearance of the area.
11. The appellant states that no objections from neighbours were received and considers it would therefore appear the design is acceptable by the community, when judged against Paragraph 131 of the Framework. However, the absence of objections does not in itself mean the proposal is acceptable. I have assessed the proposal on its merits, and the absence of objections does not alter my findings with regards to the harm identified.

Conclusion

12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.

T Bennett

INSPECTOR