

# Planning Committee

28 June 2012

**Reference:**  
**APP/12/00131**

**Area Team:**  
**North Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Mrs S Williams**

**Ward:**  
**Claughton**

**Location:** 23 ASHVILLE ROAD, BIRKENHEAD, CH41 8AU  
**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey front extension to provide 2 bedrooms & modifications to existing external store, with new access to courtyard.  
**Applicant:** Mr M McKinley  
**Agent :** Bryson McHugh Architects

## Site Plan:



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**Development Plan allocation and policies:**

Urban Greenspace  
Primarily Residential Area  
Conservation Area (for illustrative purposes)  
Historic Park or Garden

**Planning History:**

Concurrent Conservation Area Consent (CON/12/00132) - Erection of a single storey front extension to provide 2 bedrooms & modifications to existing external store, with new access to courtyard - Not Yet Determined (pending determination of this planning application).

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Having regard to the Council's Guidance on Publicity for Applications, neighbour notifications were sent to 8 neighbouring properties. A site notice was also posted on site. As a result no representations were received.

**CONSULTATIONS**

Director of Technical Services (Traffic and Transportation Division) - no objections

Friends of Birkenhead Park - no formal objections, however stated that on balance, the proposal should lead to an improvement in the overall appearance of the property from Ashville Road, although it will mean that the visual difference between 22 Ashville Road and the adjacent, semi-detached property become more marked.

**Director's Comments:**

**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE:**

Councillor Hale has requested the application be removed from delegation and considered by the Planning Committee on the following grounds:

Throughout the discussions with a senior Planning Officer, there appeared to be no issues with the content of the application in principle. The applicants are now distressed to find that the Conservation Officer has now passed comment on this application, at the eleventh hour, which are negative comments and totally go against the positive feedback received from the senior Planning Officer. The applicants do not accept the conservation justification given by the Conservation Officer as good enough reasoning to refuse the application as it is currently designed. The feedback given by the Planning Officer initially was that the proposals would improve the building significantly from Ashville Road, as there are currently various sloping roofs/buildings. The proposals seek to improve this by unifying the sloping roofs into one simple roof/building form. The Conservation Officer seems to want the existing high level parapet wall to remain, with the roof slopes as existing, for reasons which the applicants cannot understand.

**INTRODUCTION**

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a single storey front extension to provide 2 bedrooms and modifications to existing external store, with new access to courtyard.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

In principle the proposal is considered acceptable subject to relevant policies contained within Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

23 and 25 Ashville Road are symmetrical pair of late Victorian houses set within their own grounds. The houses are essentially dual-aspect, with the principal elevation facing onto Park Drive and the secondary elevation facing onto Ashville Road, with an entrance on the side. The secondary elevation appears to contain the service rooms, within the rear courtyard. This courtyard was designed to screen these service functions from public view, and these included the former outside toilets, coal store and kitchen.

The courtyard itself would have also functioned as a drying space that would have allowed clothes and linen to be dried without being on public view. These drying spaces are encountered elsewhere

within the Conservation Area, e.g adjacent at Central Lodge and are considered to be an important feature of its period housing. Apart from being a visual feature, they are a physical document of that age's preoccupation with privacy.

### **POLICY CONTEXT**

The application property is located within land designated as Primarily Residential Area in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, and the property falls under the use class C3 as it consists of self contained apartments. National Policy NPPF Section 12, HS11 – House Extensions, CH6 - Birkenhead Park Conservation Area and SPG11 – House Extensions are directly relevant in this instance.

NPPF Section 12 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The overall aim of this policy is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

The main aim of CH6 is to preserve the character and appearance of an extensive Victorian public park. Additionally, CH2 acts to preserve unifying features of design, such as gate piers, boundary fences and stone walls and the nature and extent of landscaping through the area.

With regards to HS11, it is considered that extensions should be designed in such a way as to have no significant adverse effect on the appearance of the original property, the amenities of neighbouring properties, in particular through overlooking, or an adverse effect on the area in general. SPG11: House Extensions acts as a supporting document in relation to HS11.

### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The courtyard wall remains in the adjacent property, 25 Ashville Road. It is considered that the treatment of these features should be consistent such that the symmetrical character of the buildings is maintained. The proposal as it stands, would result in the removal of the boundary wall, to form an up stand or parapet between the two existing extensions, thus creating a marked change in character.

The Conservation Officer had requested amended plans to retain the courtyard wall, in its exterior personality and the new extension set back. It was considered that these amendments if received would have satisfied original concerns. However, unfortunately amended plans were not received.

From a design point of view, the low pitch of the roof to the extension would sit awkwardly with the steeper angle of the principal gable of the house. The absence of a window in the north facing gable is also undesirable as this gable would fail to engage with the street scene. Additionally, the north facing elevation of the application property is relatively prominent within the street environment of Ashville Road, and therefore requires a high standard of design that harmonies well with the main building.

Therefore, due to the above, The Local Planning Authority is unable to support this proposal in its current form as it is considered that the proposed development would form a negative impact to the appearance of the building and the character of the Conservation Area.

### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

### **HEALTH ISSUES**

There are no health implications relating to this application.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposal will result in a development which, by virtue of it's scale and design, would have an

adverse impact on the appearance of the original dwelling, the wider street scene and Birkenhead Park Conservation Area. This is considered to be contrary to National Policy NPPF section 12, policy CH6 and HS11 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

**Recommended**      **Refuse**  
**Decision:**

**Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The proposal will result in a development which, by virtue of its scale and design, would have an adverse impact on the appearance of the original dwelling, the wider street scene and Birkenhead Park Conservation Area. This is considered to be contrary to National Policy NPPF section 12, policy CH6 and HS11 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

**Further Notes for Committee:**

**Last Comments By:** 21/03/2012  
**Expiry Date:** 04/04/2012