

Planning Committee

10 June 2021

Reference:
APP/21/00016

Area Team:
**Development
Management Team**

Case Officer:
Ms C Robinson

Ward:
**West Kirby and
Thurstaston**

Location: 20 BEACON DRIVE, NEWTON, CH48 7ED

Proposal: (amended) Access improvements; Erection of two storey extensions (to the front, rear and side); Extensions to existing dormers alongside the introduction of x1 new front dormer; erection of x2 balconies to the rear elevation

Applicant: Ms Mottram
Agent : MDA

Qualifying Petition: No

Site Plan:



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Development Plan designation:
Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

No relevant planning history.

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

1.0 WARD MEMBER COMMENTS

1.1 Cllr Johnson echoed the concerns from the objection comments which had been submitted to date. The reasons for objection put forward by Cllr Johnson include -

1. The tree to the front grass verge will be lost. One of the most valued features of this road is the mature tree lined feature to both sides of the carriage way.
2. The road also enjoys a 2.0m width of grass verges outside each house, for the total length of the road. This application want to remove the grass verge and open up the front garden to create a 4 bay wide parking area. This would completely destroy the unique character of the verges and trees, and the green look to our neighbourhood.
3. The dwelling is to be extended in most directions including a two storey extension to the front which I believe is not allowed, only porches.
4. The application proposes to enlarge an existing front dormer window, and to add a new dormer to the opposite end of the house to match. The new dormer designs are totally out of character both in appearance and scale, which is unacceptable
5. The rear elevation seeks permission to add on very large dormers to the first floor level which will have double doors leading onto a balcony design. Although the guard rail is set back amount, to limit the 'fish eye' view, the dormers are so wide, neighbouring gardens to both sides will definitely lose their privacy to the rear gardens, to an extent that they would be unusable without being watched.
6. The proposal seeks approval for the above balcony, which in my experience encourages the owners to sit out a lot longer than if it were a balconette, or a simple window.
7. The application is also for a double storey side extension which will take up the side pathway and access of the house, and also mean that there is a reduced gap between these houses, and this will be the start of a terraced street scene if it were to be copied in the future.

A request was therefore made to remove the application from delegation.

2.0 SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 REPRESENTATIONS

2.1.1 The residents of four neighbouring properties were initially notified by way of advertisement. Notice was also posted at the site. At the time of writing this report, 20 representations have been received objecting to the proposal. The main concerns are summarised as follows -

- The essential character of Beacon Drive lies in its tree lined and grass verge vista. The removal of either of these special features can only have a negative effect on appearance.
- Parking for three cars could be achieved at this property without having to remove a tree, as is here proposed.
- Proposal is of detriment to the character and visual amenity of Beacon Drive
- This proposal would reduce safe and available on road parking, thus affecting

residential amenity

- This proposal is not beneficial in environmental and landscape terms.
- No neighbour notification letter was received
- While permeable paving (proposed) does help absorb surface water run-off, the loss of grass and planting in the front garden and road verge increases the likelihood that run-off into the road will worsen during periods of heavy rain, increasing with Climate Change
- Precedent for further tree/verge/boundary wall loss in the street
- The extension brings built form very close to the neighbouring property; it shall inhibit space and light to an already narrow gap between the properties
- Lack of privacy in the neighbouring gardens which shall be overlooked by the proposed balconies
- Risk to pedestrians through the removal of the garden wall leaving no separation from the pavement and moving vehicles
- Proposed window changes are not in keeping nor appropriate and will radically affect the character of the house and the streetscene
- Adverse environmental impact of such a large amount of paving
- No retaining walls are shown on the plan to support the tiered/sloped garden; potential structural implications on neighbouring properties.
- If a precedent is set, and many other properties remove large chunks of their front walls, this could compromise the selling point potentially affecting the value of the houses in the road
- The dormer enlargement is unacceptable; the street is lucky to have dormer windows to the front of properties as it's not normally allowed, but the proposal has taken no account of proportion, and is simply half a timber shed planted on the roof.

2.2

CONSULTATIONS

2.2.1

Traffic & Transportation

There are no objections from a Traffic and Transportation perspective.

All access to the property (both pedestrian and vehicular) remains via the frontage on Beacon Drive. The property has off road curtilage parking for two and probably three vehicles, without a need to 'shuffle' vehicles. There is also kerbside parking space available on Beacon Drive.

Reduction in length of the front wall to widen the 'sweep' for vehicle access/egress does not require a significant amendment to the existing vehicle crossing, only a change in construction of a small area of footpath construction to vehicle crossing construction. The existing vehicle crossing will remain as is.

With the existing vehicle crossing remaining unaffected for vehicle drivers, visibility splays also remain unaffected for vehicle drivers and there should be no requirement for relocation of an existing mature tree in order to allow an adequate scenario of highway safety.

Parking, visibility splays and access are therefore not affected by the proposed development.

No objection.

- The proposals are all contained within a private boundary and do not impact on the adopted highway.
- The level of on-site car parking remains in accordance with the SPD4 maximum standards.
- The existing vehicle access remains unaffected by the proposals.
- It's unlikely that the proposals will generate a significant level of traffic and it is therefore considered to have no material impact on the highway, as such there are no objections to the proposal.

2.2.2

Highway Asset

No objection to the amended vehicle crossing proposals. Informatives are recommended relating to the highway tree -in case the tree roots are affected, and the existing tree

requires removing as a result of the access works across the footway. General practice is to replace any highway tree removal with two new ones in the vicinity.

No objection, no condition; please see decision notice, where an informative is recommended

3.1 Site and Surroundings

3.1.1 The application site is a detached brick-built dwelling located in a residential context of West Kirby. The property, constructed circa the 1950s, sits on a street characterised by its greenery where there are generous grass verges and a variety of street trees.

3.2 Proposed Development

3.2.1 This application seeks permission for alterations and additions to increase and modernize this property. These works include -

- Erection of two storey extensions (to the front, rear and side).
- Extensions to existing dormers alongside the introduction of x1 new front dormer;
- Erection of x2 balconies to the rear elevation

The access is also proposed to be improved.

3.3 Development Plan

3.3.1 HS11 - Housing Extensions

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

3.4.1 NPPF
SPG - House Extensions

3.5 Assessment

3.5.1 The main issues pertinent in the assessment of the proposal are;

- Principle of development (appropriateness of residential development in rural location).
- Design;
- Highways and PROW;
- Environmental/Sustainability issues; and
- Visual and Neighbouring amenity
- Other matters raised by objectors

3.6 Principle of Development:

3.6.1 The application site is located within a designated Primarily Residential area the principle of the proposal is deemed acceptable subject to compliance with UDP Policy HS11, its impact on visual and residential amenity and to the local highway network.

3.7 Design:

3.7.1 This application seeks to pursue a variety of alterations and additions to the property in order to increase and modernize the accommodation of the home. Alterations are also proposed to the access and parking arrangements at the property, intended to facilitate and improve the existing driveway and parking provision.

3.7.2 The proposal seeks to install one new front dormer and enlarge an existing dormer in the front elevation. Front dormers are contrary to policy HS11 however - per above - they are already in the host property, In addition, these are a common feature in this streetscene. Numerous properties have two dormers and a feature gable in their principle elevation - the closest example being no.18 next door - thus this overall design approach is not inappropriate. The dormers have been modified during the course of the application in order to sit more comfortably within the roofscape and streetscene; The window configuration has

been amended and their width reduced to aid initial concerns of an unacceptably top-heavy addition to the roofscape. The dormers contained within the current design are acknowledged to be larger than those in the vicinity; however they are compliant with the criteria of SPG House Extensions in terms of their set back/down from the walls and side/ridge height. When considering the context of the streetscene, structures are not considered sufficiently visually inappropriate to warrant the refusal of this application.

- 3.7.3 As originally proposed, the scheme included a two-storey front extension. The feature gable was subsequently amended to reflect those in the locality, and a simple single storey porch added to supplement the ground floor accommodation. These revisions are considered appropriate to the property and streetscene, and to meet the overarching aims of HS11.
- 3.7.4 A two-storey side extension is also proposed. UDP policy HS11 specifies criteria designed to ward against the effect of terracing or additions that are out of scale with the original dwelling, thus threatening the character of the street scene. SPG House Extensions also sets out criteria to this regard; the less strict SPG criteria are considered to generally achieve the overarching policy aims of HS11. They are also recognised a more practical solution to addressing the issue of terracing.
- 3.7.5 The two-storey side extension proposed is constructed within 0.15m of the curtilage boundary, and does not observe a lowered ridgeline as is recommended to aid subservience. This is contrary to the aforementioned guidance; numerous comments of objection have also cited concerns in regard to excessive scale of development and terracing concerns.
- 3.7.6 Whilst pursuing a reduction in ridge height of the side extension is an option, it is considered that this would have a detrimental impact on the proposed design, in terms of its contrast and jarring with the surrounding properties; any benefit in terms of gained subservience is considered to be negatively outweighed by the degradation in the design approach. The street is also on a gradient, should the neighbouring no.18 construct to the curtilage boundary in future that the difference in ridge height and design of the properties between the properties would largely ward against threat from terracing. There are numerous properties in the vicinity of the design here proposed, spanning most of the plot width plus incorporating two dormer windows and a feature gable into the principal elevation; with this in mind, seeking amendments to draw the extension in from the boundary were not deemed necessary. The aims of HS11, in terms of the overall design approach, are considered to be met and - on balance - this element of the proposal is viewed acceptable.
- 3.7.7 A single storey rear extension is proposed, alongside two smaller first floor extensions and the enlargement of an existing dormer to the rear. The single storey projection is broadly in line with the criteria of the SPG, where - when within 1m of the curtilage boundary - its projection measures 3.1m. The proposed first floor additions consist of two feature gables, and a modestly scaled box dormer window located between the two. On balance, these additions are considered proportionate to the host dwelling and in accordance with the overall policy aims. The ridgelines are comfortably below the main host dwelling, and the roofslope matching the existing.
- 3.7.8 Whilst the box dormer is not aesthetically optimal its scale is modest, and its siting and material selection will see it a relatively subtle addition to the roofscape thus - on balance - an appropriate addition. It will not protrude beyond the feature gables thus not be visible from the side. As viewed from the rear it shall be read against the context of the roofslope; the hanging tiles proposed for its covering shall match the existing roofslope, thus helping to camouflage the addition. The size and siting of this dormer complies with the advice set out in SPG House Extensions.
- 3.7.9 It's recognised that elements of this proposal are contrary to the specific criteria of HS11 and SPG House Extensions. The proposal, as a whole, however is viewed on balance and considered to be acceptable. The street is characterised by a number of different property types/character attributes, and the proposed design takes elements from several properties within the street to well suit the local character; the resultant design is therefore an

appropriate fit within the streetscene. Several properties span all but the entire plot width, and many exhibit a principle elevation design of a central gable flanked by two dormers - the currently proposed design is a variation of these local design cues.. The design is considered to meet the overarching aims of HS11 and SPG House Extensions, plus represent sustainable development per paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

3.8 Highways:

3.8.1 The originally proposed access arrangement compromised the existing levels of on-street parking; the revised proposals will have no impact on this matter. The improvement of the existing access arrangement also negates any concerns raised by objectors regarding pedestrian safety. Permitted development is a legitimate fallback for an access tantamount to that currently proposed. Class F of Schedule 1 of the Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) allows for the provision of hard surfacing to the front of a property where porous materials are used; the proposed drawings confirm the selection of porous materials for undertaking these works. Equally, the boundary wall could also be removed under permitted development rights.

3.8.2 Reduction in length of the front wall to widen the 'sweep' for vehicle access/egress does not require a significant amendment to the existing vehicle crossing, only a change in construction of a small area of footpath construction to vehicle crossing construction. The existing vehicle crossing will remain as is. With the existing vehicle crossing remaining unaffected for vehicle drivers, visibility splays also remain unaffected for vehicle drivers; there shall be no requirement therefore to relocate the existing mature tree in order to amend the existing visibility splays. Parking, visibility splays and access are therefore not affected by the proposed development.

3.8.3 The extent of alterations to the property access raised concerns in terms of visual impact and local character. Whilst the boundary wall could be substantially removed as permitted development the original proposal also involved the removal of substantial levels of highway grass verge in order to provide level crossover for three vehicles whilst retaining the existing driveway for disabled access. The streetscene is characterised by its greenery, being tree lined and containing generous amounts of grass verge. The removal of such extents of greenery would be at odds with this, plus the resultant driveway uncharacteristically open and large for domestic use.

3.8.4 These concerns were relayed to the agent in order to seek resolution. In-and-out driveways are frequent in the locality, however due to the gradient of the site this was deemed an unfit solution in this instance. Consequently, revised proposals were received seeking only to widen the existing driveway by way of improving the access arrangements to the property. These works would extend towards an existing highway tree; per the proposed plans, thereby not affecting the tree which is shown to be retained. The proposed drawings confirm that porous materials shall be used for the widened access; with this in mind, the proposed access alterations are very similar to what the fallback of permitted development would allow.

3.9 Environmental/Sustainability issues:

3.9.1 There are no environment or sustainability issues arising from this proposal

3.10 Visual and Neighbouring amenity:

3.10.1 Much objection was received on visual amenity grounds, particularly regarding the originally submitted access arrangements; all but the entirety of the highway verge in front of the property was set to be removed, which would have a notable visual impact plus be contrary to the local character. Following negotiations, a revised design has been submitted to minimise the proposed widening of the existing access in order to improve the vehicular manoeuvrability within the site. The proposed access width is comparable to those in the surrounding area and allows the retention of the grass verge, thus is considered wholly appropriate within the streetscene. The highway trees are also an important part of local

character in this vicinity. As detailed in section 3.8, the existing mature tree adjacent the access is intended to remain.

- 3.10.2 The visual implications of the alterations to the property have largely been discussed above. Though the proposal represents an increase scale and massing, the resultant property is considered to be a sympathetic recreation of local design cues which sits wholly appropriately within the streetscene as a whole. On this basis, there are not considered to be adverse visual impacts associated with this proposal.
- 3.10.3 The works do not contain any new side fenestration which could pose direct threat of overlooking to adjoining side neighbour's no's 18 and 22. There is no concern of overlooking to the front nor rear, where separation distances are more than met. In terms of potential overbearing impact, no.18 has windows serving a garage and a utility room serving the site. The land between the house and the shared curtilage boundary is a narrow strip, appearing to serve access to the rear garden only. Whilst the proposed side extension will be within close proximity of the shared boundary, the fenestration/land which shall be nearest to it are not particularly sensitive; the compromise to amenity in this regard is therefore considered minimal, and not sufficiently detrimental to warrant the refusal of this application.
- 3.10.4 No built form will extend any closer to no.22 than the existing host dwelling, thus there is no concern in terms of overbearing impacts. Where loss of light is concerned, the orientation of the properties in relation to the direction of sun travel sees that any shadow cast shall be over the curtilage of the host dwelling and thus the bulk of light loss shall not impact neighbouring residents.
- 3.10.5 Two rear balconies are proposed, which have attracted much concern in terms of loss of privacy and overlooking. Both balconies - though not identical in their layout - are designed that the balcony footprint is enclosed within the wall and roof cover of the feature gables; the 'closed' balcony structure offers much additional protection to the amenity of neighbouring residents in comparison to a standard balcony structure. Aside from mitigating overlooking (further discussed below) an enclosed structure will help to lessen noise pollution, thus reducing any amenity harm associated with the noise and disturbance generated from the recreational use of a balcony.
- 3.10.6 The easterly balcony is fully enclosed on both sides, with the non-enclosed section measuring 2.2m wide within the 4.2m gable i.e. that one metre of solid wall either side shall obscure and enclose the structure to the rear. Without leaning over the guardrail, this sees that occupants of the balcony have no angled vantage points. As aforementioned, the separation distances to the rear are very generous thus there is no overlooking harm from direct views to the rear.
- 3.10.7 The westerly balcony is of slightly different design, being not so fully enclosed. The guardrail is set back 1m from the side wall constructed along the curtilage boundary shared with no.18. The nature of the design - in terms of this setback and the roofslope - shall ensure no close-range vantage points from the balcony to the neighbouring curtilage. Any views glimpsed would be more similar, in terms of their impact on privacy, to looking out of a first floor window which is - obviously - less intrusive than vantage points from a balcony. This design is considered sufficient in ensuring an acceptable level of privacy to no.18. The guardrail set back from the other side wall is less, measuring 0.5m; however, any angled views here shall overlook the rear curtilage of the host dwelling itself, thus there is no concern in terms of amenity.
- 3.10.8 Where both balconies are concerned, guardrails are in place to delineate the permitted balcony space thus the flat roof of the ground floor extension shall not be readily accessed from the first floor. The roof area is not permitted for use as amenity space by this application, and a condition attached against the decision notice reinforces this.

3.11 Other matters raised by objectors

- 3.11.1 Article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended) details the manner in which planning applications must be publicised. For this type of application, the order states that requisite notice must be given by site display or serving notice on any adjoining owner or occupier. The Local Authority has fulfilled its legal obligations, by serving notice on those adjoining owners and occupiers. Since front dormers represent a departure to the local development plan, notice was also posted at the site advertising this.
- 3.11.2 The design-based representations received - including scale of the extensions, design of the property, size/inclusion of dormer windows - have been discussed in the relevant Design section of this report. Where design precedent is concerned, all planning applications are assessed on their own merits and the individual site and scheme contexts weighed up in the planning balance.
- 3.11.3 The vast majority of concerns raised within the objection comments were directly associated with the originally proposed access arrangements. These included: risk to pedestrian safety, loss of highway trees and verge, new access unnecessary and out of character etc. The revised access arrangement has addressed the majority of these issues. Objections regarding the loss of the front boundary wall are noted and are largely omitted via the revisions; however, as detailed above, this feature could be removed under permitted development rights.
- 3.11.4 Concerns regarding water drainage and runoff were expressed. Again, the revisions to the access arrangement vastly mitigate this scenario. In any event, porous materials are specified for use thus ensuring permeability of rainwater.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following: -

Viewed in isolation, the separate components of this proposal aren't strictly policy compliant; however, as an overall design approach, the proposal is not considered to have a harmful visual impact on its surroundings and aligns with the overarching aims of NPPF - Requiring Good Design, HS11 - House Extensions and SPG11. The proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact to the amenities that the occupiers of neighbouring properties expect to enjoy. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommended Decision: **Approve**

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on March 25th and May 17th 2021 and listed as follows:

- 2024_03_24 101D dated 2021.03.24
- 2024_03_24 102D dated 2021.03.24
- 2024_03_24 103F dated 2021.05.17
- 2024_03_24 104D dated 2021.03.24

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. The roof area of single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area without the grant of further specific permission from the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and amenities of the locality.

Further Notes for Committee:

1. Consent under the Highways Act is required for the construction of a new or the amendment/removal of an existing vehicular access. Such works are undertaken at the developer's expense, including the relocation/replacement and/or removal of street furniture and vegetation as necessary. Submission of a S50 Highway Opening Notice is required prior to commencement of any works on the adopted highway. Please contact the Council Highway Management team area manager via www.wirral.gov.uk prior to the commencement of the works for the approval of the proposed details

Last Comments By: 20/04/2021 15:35:58

Expiry Date: 04/03/2021