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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2011

**by Gary Deane BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 13 September 2011**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W4325/D/11/2157355**

**137 Raeburn Avenue, Eastham, Wirral CH62 8BE**

- 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 and Mrs C Edwards against the decision of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
  - The application Ref APP/11/00548, dated 6 May 2011, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2011.
  - The development proposed is the retention of single storey garage side extension.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Procedural matter

2. The proposed development is complete and appears to have been constructed broadly in accordance with the plan.

## Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the local area.

## Reasons

4. The appeal property, 137 Raeburn Avenue, is a semi-detached house that has been extended at the side to include a 2-storey addition and a single storey garage. It occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Raeburn Avenue and Kilburn Avenue. The site lies in a predominantly residential area that is largely characterised by pairs of semi-detached houses of similar design, age and appearance. While there is variety in the boundary treatment of nearby residential properties, low-level walls and vegetation generally mark the highway frontages of dwellings in the vicinity of the site. Taken together, these characteristics give a broad uniformity and general consistency to existing development and a spacious feel to the local street scene.
  5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 11, *House Extensions*, (SPG) advises that great care is needed in the design of extensions involving corner plots because these locations often provide an open appearance, greenery and are prominent from both streets. Accordingly, the SPG advises that the width of the extension should be no more than half the width of the property's
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- original frontage and no more than half the width of the side garden/plot between the property and the adjacent highway. The single storey addition extends the front building line of No 137 up to the site's boundary with Kilburn Avenue. In doing so, the combined width of the two extensions made to the appeal property would not accord with this general guidance.
6. When viewed from the adjacent highways, the substantial built form of No 137 and the considerable expanse of brickwork, including the boundary wall and gate that have also been erected along the site's boundary to Kilburn Avenue, are particularly evident. This creates an abrupt and formal transition between the appeal property and the adjacent highway. It sharply contrasts with the corner plot property on the opposite side of the same junction, which forms part of a modest sized pair of semi-detached houses with a relatively generous side garden, well stocked with bushes and trees, next to the highway. To my mind, the characteristics of this nearby property, unlike No 137, combine to create some sense of space and informality that is broadly consistent with the overall character of the local area.
  7. Taking all of these points into account, particularly the 2-storey side addition to No 137, it is my view that the extension has disrupted the pattern of existing development, significantly increased the prominence of the appeal property, and unduly eroded the space around the adjacent junction. As such, it is an unwelcome and obtrusive addition to the local area, in conflict with the Council's SPG. In reaching this view, I have taken into account the use of external materials to match the host dwelling.
  8. I saw that several properties in the local area have been altered and extended, including those to which the appellants have referred. However, none of the properties have extensions that are comparable in design, scale and position nor do they occupy prominent corner plots with the same relationship to nearby buildings as in this instance. Therefore, these developments do not weigh in support of the appellants' case.
  9. I therefore conclude that the development causes significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area, in conflict with the Council's SPG.
  10. The appellants consider that the proposal accords with Policy HS11 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan, and in particular criterion (i). This part of the policy mainly relates to the relationship of house extensions to the size of the plot and the existing building. My concern is much broader than these particular considerations. It primarily relates to the effect of the extended dwelling on the local street scene and the pattern of existing development in the local area.
  11. I have had regard to all other matters raised. However, these matters are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Gary Deane*

INSPECTOR