

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2016

by Jim Metcalf BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 June 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/16/3143976

5 Harefield Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire East, SK9 1NJ

- 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 Herring Properties Ltd against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 15/1278M, dated 11 March 2015, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing bungalow and construction of two two-storey detached dwellings with accesses.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the street scene along Harefield Drive.

Reasons

3. No 5 Harefield Drive is a detached bungalow sat in a spacious garden and fronting the street in a corner position. At the corner Harefield Drive turns along the side boundary and then runs behind the site so that, with the exception of No 3 Harefield Drive, properties on three sides face the property across the street.
 4. Harefield Drive serves a small residential area that has developed over the years, and leads into Whitehall Close. It also leads to older buildings connected with Fulshaw Hall and Harefield Farm. The incremental nature of the enclave is reflected in the variety of property in the area with bungalows and houses, detached and semi-detached, of differing size, scale, architectural style and design. The layout of the more modern development is informal with dwellings grouped along winding access-ways. Directly opposite, across Harefield Drive, is a row of bungalows, whilst No 3 Harefield Drive, next door, is a detached house.
 5. Policies BE1 and DC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (LP) seek to promote high standards of design, that would reflect local character and be sympathetic to the scale, height, mass and materials of an area. Other policies set down criteria designed to ensure that the space around and between
-

properties and other features create an attractive high quality living environment. This approach reflects the National Planning Policy Framework (NPP) that explains that great importance should be attached to the design of the built environment.

6. The two houses would sit on the existing building line, with one slightly behind the other, separated by a 2.5m gap, facing the street. The two houses would be identical in design, but opposite handed, with a projecting, full height gable above a ground floor bay. The hipped roof would have a ridge at about the same height as No 3 Harefield Drive. A garage would be positioned beyond the main side wall, with a bedroom above in a dormer roof.
7. Each house would sit on a plot about 15m wide, somewhat narrower than other properties along the street. The side elevation of House 5 would be closer to No 3 Harefield Drive than the bungalow. On the other side House 5a would be closer to the street than the existing property. This would reduce the width of the side garden, and generally the amount of space around the built form on the plot. It would also require the removal of some vegetation and small trees. The boundary hedge would remain at the side but would be removed, replaced with a low wall, along the frontage to allow the formation of a new drive to the second house.
8. The houses, reflected in their height, width and depth and their relative closeness to the boundaries on either side, would be seen as an uncharacteristically bulky and substantial block stretching across the plot. The development would have a cramped appearance at odds with the attractive and generally low density, spacious environment of the small enclave of properties served by Harefield Drive. This would be the case notwithstanding the variety of house types in the area. For this reason the development would not be the high quality, sensitive design that LP Policies BE1 and DC1 seek to promote.
9. Neighbours who overlook the site are concerned that the new houses would impose on their outlook. LP Policy DC38 is designed to safeguard residential amenity in respect of light, privacy and space between buildings. Although the outlook of neighbours would change, the distance of the houses from others would be greater than specified in LP Policy DC38 by a reasonable margin. The Council have not referred to any shortfall or inadequacy in this respect in their reasons for refusal and I have no reason to find differently on this matter.
10. The site is located in a convenient position with ready access to an extensive range of services and other facilities. To that extent it is a sustainable location for people to live and an additional house would be a contribution, albeit limited, to the current shortfall in the area of land for housing. However, these factors do not outweigh my concerns that the scale and form of the houses would significantly detract from the character and appearance of the street scene along Harefield Drive, contrary to LP Policies BE1 and DC1 and NPPF.

Jim Metcalf

INSPECTOR