
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2019

by F Rafiq BSc (Hons), MCD, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/19/3228186

The Coach House, Stamford Road, Alderley Edge, SK9 7NS

- 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 Mrs Hilary Macfarlane against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 18/5979M, dated 29 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is two first floor side extensions, single storey side extension and replacement single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. An amended plan was submitted during the course of the planning application which removed a first floor front bedroom window. The Council have confirmed that their decision was based on the amended plan and that the third reason for refusal is not relevant. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) the character and appearance of the host property and the area, and (2) the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers with reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property consists of a former coach house building which has been converted to residential use. It is situated to the rear of buildings on, and accessed from, a drive off Stamford Road. The appeal building is a modest two storey dwelling, with single storey elements to either side, although the area is characterised by large detached and semi-detached buildings, set on generally consistent building lines facing the highway and behind front garden areas. These features give the residential area an attractive and established verdant character.
5. The proposal includes two first floor side extensions, to either side of the existing two storey central section of the dwelling. I acknowledge that the development overall would only represent an increase of around 30% in floorspace and volume terms and would not result in a large increase in the

footprint. However, the first floor elements would add considerable mass to the upper parts of the building. Although the surrounding properties are of a larger scale, the appeal building is a smaller dwelling and occupies, as the Appellant acknowledges, a backland position. These extensions would not reflect the scale of the host building and despite them being designed with lower eaves and ridge heights than the existing dwelling and utilising matching materials, they would, nevertheless, appear as disproportionate additions.

6. As the site is set back and down from Stamford Road, it is not prominent in the streetscene, but it would still be seen along the driveway from public vantage points. Its larger scale would result in it not having the same subordinate appearance that it currently has to the larger buildings fronting the road. The first floor elements of the proposal, would result in the dwelling extending across much of the width of the site, eroding the space above ground level and having a harmful visual effect on the appearance of the area.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. The proposal would be contrary to Policy SE 1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan and Policy DC2 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which seek, amongst other matters, to ensure that development proposals make a positive contribution to their surroundings. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which seeks the creation of better places and states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Living Conditions

8. The appeal property is situated in close proximity to a number of neighbouring properties, including the Presbytery and Willow Croft. The first floor extension on the eastern side of the appeal property would be to the rear of the Presbytery. Whilst I note this neighbouring property is only around 5.8m from the appeal building, given the difference in heights between them and the elevated position of the Presbytery, I do not consider that there would be any harmful effect on outlook.
9. I was able to view the appeal proposal from the neighbouring dwelling at Willow Croft during my visit. The first floor extension on the western side would be situated close to the boundary with this neighbouring property, but there would be an angled relationship between the appeal and neighbouring buildings. Furthermore, from my site observations, I was able to see the established vegetation along the boundary and the siting of this neighbouring property was at a higher level. I consider that these factors together would be sufficient to ensure that there would be no unacceptable overbearing effect on the outlook of this neighbouring property's occupiers, including from its garden area.
10. The proposal would therefore not have any unduly detrimental effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in relation to outlook. There would be no conflict with Policy DC3 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that development does not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property. There would also be no conflict with the Framework, which seeks at Paragraph 127, a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

11. Reference has been made to the appeal proposal having been subject to pre-application discussions, which the Appellant sought to respond to. I have however considered the appeal before me on its own merits.
12. I note that the proposal would improve the condition of the existing property which is in a poor state of repair and contribute towards reducing environmental and climate change impact. These aspects of the scheme gain support from the Framework and the development plan. The development would not however represent sustainable development as set out in the Framework, as it would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
13. I note all other concerns expressed by neighbouring occupiers, but none would lead to me a different decision on the appeal.

Conclusion

14. I have found in the Appellants favour in relation to the issue of living conditions. However, I conclude that the appeal proposal would be unacceptable in relation to the impact on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
15. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, including the lack of objection from the Diocese of Shrewsbury, the acceptability of the single storey elements and the principle of extending within the settlement boundary, the appeal should be dismissed.

F Rafiq

INSPECTOR