



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2019

by S D Castle BSC(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/19/3231725

60 Westfield Drive, Knutsford WA16 0BN

- 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 Ross Gordon against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 19/1674M, dated 3 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is dropped kerb to form driveway access and single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, semi-detached, pitch-roofed dwelling located on a corner plot at the head of a cul-de-sac that forms part of Westfield Drive. The dwelling fronts northwards onto the 'hammerhead' of the cul-de-sac and has a gable-ended side elevation facing onto Westfield Drive to the east. A small, flat roof single-storey extension is located to the rear of the appeal dwelling, which it is indicated would be demolished. The dwelling's elevations are set back from the highway on both its front and side aspects. The highway facing boundaries of the appeal site predominantly comprise a low brick wall with a high mature hedge above. This part of Westfield Drive is characterised by similar semi-detached dwellings, set back from the highway along relatively consistent building lines. The dwellings form cohesive groupings, whose set-back from the highway, in combination with significant areas of both public and private landscaping, gives a spacious and verdant character to the area.
4. The Council has not raised any objections within the delegated report to the dropped kerb forming a driveway access. On the basis of the submitted evidence and my own observations, I also see no reason to object to this aspect of the proposals.
5. Turning to the proposed single-storey extension, whilst it takes its design cues from the existing dwelling in terms of materials, it would project beyond the established building line of dwellings on this part of Westfield Drive. This would not reflect the established pattern of development. I note that some separation distance between the extension and the highway boundary would be retained. I

also note that the existing boundary hedge would provide some softening of the visual impact of the proposal. Nevertheless, given the prominent corner plot location of the extension, the extension would be clearly visible and it would incongruously protrude towards the road, harmful to the spacious character of the area identified above.

6. I note the appellant's reference to other examples of side extensions in the surrounding area, including at the junctions of Westfield Drive and Acacia Avenue and at the junction of Westfield Drive and Tabley Grove. In the case of those particular examples, the dwellings form part of a more varied building line along Westfield Drive. I do not find them directly comparable to the appeal site or to significantly influence the character of the street scene of the appeal site. In any event, I must consider the specific proposal before me, having regard to its particular merits.
7. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would be out of kilter with existing development in the surrounding area and would represent a discordant feature in the street scene harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policies SD2 and SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2017). Taken together, these policies require, amongst other things, development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, achieving a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements. The development is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that planning should always seek to ensure a high standard of design and that development should respond to local character and add to the overall qualities of an area.
8. The Council's refusal reason refers to conflict with the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (2017). However, no substantive evidence is before me from the Council to substantiate the stated conflict. Notwithstanding this, I do not find it a matter determinative in my decision.

Conclusion

9. Whilst I acknowledge the importance of good quality housing to meet the needs of current and future residents within the Borough and that this would attract some limited weight in support of the proposal, for the reasons given above, I nevertheless conclude that the identified harm would outweigh any benefits and the appeal should be dismissed.

S D Castle

INSPECTOR