



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2020 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/19/3238637

20 Beechwood, Knutsford, WA16 8AR

- 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 David Hayes against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 19/3721M, dated 5 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is "Re-roofing to raise the height of the roof ridge and provide two bedrooms in the revised roof space together with roof windows and a side dormer to accommodate a shower room. Revising the front elevation by narrowing the front window and providing a glazed side screen beside the front entrance door. Moving a door on the side elevation and the French doors on the rear elevation."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on the availability of single storey accommodation in Knutsford.

Reasons

4. Beechwood is within a residential area of Knutsford. The property is a single storey dwelling within a row of uniformly designed bungalows, set back from the road with open frontages. There has been little change to the form and massing of the bungalows and the character of the area is derived from their uniformity. The dwellings on the opposite side of the road are two storey link detached, again with open frontages. There is a slight slope along Beechwood.
5. The proposal is to raise the roof of the bungalow and add a side dormer to provide bedroom and shower room accommodation on the first floor of the property. There would be no significant alterations to the external appearance of the dwelling, notwithstanding the addition of a second storey. Due to the sloping nature of Beechwood, the raising of the roof would have little impact on the street scene and on neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light.

6. However, planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwiseⁱ. In this case the Development Plan includes the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) which came into force after a referendum in 2019. Its policies are given full weight. Policy H3 of the KNP, which relates to residential extensions and conversions, seeks to ensure, amongst other things, "that development does not reduce the availability of single storey accommodation (bungalows) through the adding of an additional storey(s)". Although I have limited evidence on the matter, I understand that there is an identified demand for single storey properties within the community, which the KNP therefore seeks to retain.
7. I recognise that the proposal would retain one bedroom on the ground floor. I also note the various definitions of a 'bungalow' supplied by the appellant. However, the proposal would clearly add a second storey to the property. As such, due to the addition of the second storey, and the consequent loss of a single storey dwelling, the proposal is contrary to Policy H3 of the KNP.

Other Matters

8. I note the appellant's contention that there is a tension between Policy H3 and Policy H1 of the KNP. However, Policy H1 relates to the provision of new residential development rather than the extension of existing dwellings. Moreover, whilst that policy indicates support for housing for older people or those with reduced mobility either as one or two storey dwellings, it states that those particular houses should be designed with the specific needs of those users. Whilst I acknowledge that the bungalow, if extended in the manner proposed, could be used by some older members of the community, it is not a new dwelling, nor purpose designed to meet those specific needs.
9. My attention has been drawn to examples of potentially similar development at nearby dwellings. However, the full details of each case have not been submitted and therefore I cannot be certain that they are directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Moreover, given that the KNP only recently came into force, I cannot be certain that the approved schemes were determined against the same policy.
10. The appellant has indicated that the proposal could be extended through the provision of dormers under 'permitted development rights', which would be more prominent in the street scene than the appeal proposal, or that the garage could be converted without the need for planning permission resulting in a reduction in parking space. Be that as it may, although the Council has acknowledged that such a development may be possible, a Certificate of Lawful Development for such development has not been sought and moreover I cannot be sure that the alternative scheme would be carried out if this appeal were to fail, particularly because of the specific issues raised. Accordingly, I give this matter limited weight as a fallback position.
11. The appellant has indicated that the proposal would provide flexible long-term accommodation, particularly in terms of the provision of accommodation for carers or visiting relatives, which may be of private benefit. However, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest, and consequently this matter carries limited weight in support of the proposal.

12. I acknowledge the appellant's frustration with the pre-application advice from the Council prior to submitting the proposal. Whilst this is unfortunate, these matters are outside the scope of this appeal.
13. Given the above, the considerations put forward in support of the appeal are not sufficient, either in themselves or taken cumulatively, to outweigh the conflict with the KNP policy that I have found.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR

ⁱ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990