



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 02 June 2020

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/20/3246393

44 Woodlands Drive, Hoole, Chester, Cheshire CH2 3QL

- 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 Nathan Pear against the decision of Cheshire West & Chester Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04135/FUL, dated 12 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 2 storey semi-detached dwelling, with single storey extensions to the side and rear. It is in a residential area characterised by matching semi-detached and detached properties finished in brick and render and with hipped roofs. Properties are separated from one another and they are set back from the street on consistent building lines. Consequently, the area has a harmonious and regular character and appearance.
4. The proposed extension would be set back from the main front elevation of the host property by approximately 750mm at first floor level. The roof would be set below the ridge line of the host property and it would be hipped. Consequently, the extension would be subservient to, and it would respect, the original roof form and front elevation of the appeal property.
5. Nevertheless, by virtue of its width and close proximity to the shared boundary with No 42, the proposal would be a bulky feature that would dominate the plot. Moreover, the lack of separation between the proposal and the side boundary would disrupt the regular rhythm of the street scene. Consequently, the proposal would be a visually obtrusive and discordant feature.
6. No 42 has not been extended to the side and there is therefore a gap between the neighbouring property and the shared boundary. Nevertheless,

by virtue of the increased bulk of built development immediately adjacent to the side boundary, the proposal would contribute to a sense of enclosure and a terracing effect in this part of the street. It would not respect local character and distinctiveness and it would not make a positive contribution to a sense of place.

7. My attention has been drawn to side extensions elsewhere in the area, including on Woodlands Drive. However, those schemes do not appear to be directly comparable to the appeal proposal and they do not provide a visual context for it. Where schemes have been built close to boundaries, these appear to relate to detached properties or first floor extensions above an existing built footprint. Elsewhere, schemes avoid the appearance of terracing by maintaining a gap between properties. Accordingly, they do not provide a justification for the appeal scheme.
8. Therefore, the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the design aims of Policy ENV6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies Adopted January 2015 and Policy DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Adopted July 2019. It would also conflict with the guidance in the Chester City Council Supplementary Planning Document House Extensions Adopted July 2006.

Other matters

9. I appreciate that the appellant wants to increase the size of the property to accommodate additional family members, including children and elderly parents. However, although the proposal would enhance the internal living space, it would not create any additional bedrooms such as would seem necessary to accommodate a much extended family. I accept that one of the existing bedrooms is relatively small. However, it has not been demonstrated that the 3 bedroom appeal property is not suitable for a family or that it could not accommodate more than one child.
10. Opportunities to create additional bedrooms may be limited by such factors as the height of the loft and the size of the garden. However, there is little substantive evidence that alternative solutions that would deliver similar benefits have either been explored or discounted. I understand that the appellant wants to avoid the expense of developing an alternative scheme and that he does not want to move to a new house. However, his personal circumstances and wishes in this regard are not a compelling justification to allow a proposal that would conflict with the development plan.
11. While the appellant was not aware of the Council's concerns regarding the impact of the proposal, there is no evidence before me in this regard in the form of pre-application advice or correspondence between the parties. Therefore, while I understand that the decision of the Council will have been a disappointment, this does not weigh in favour of the scheme.
12. The submitted plans indicate that there would be no windows in the side elevation of the extension. Therefore, the proposal would not result in any loss of privacy or overlooking of the occupiers of No 42. There would be no adverse impacts on the highway. These are requirements of the development plan and they do not weigh in favour of the scheme.

13. While I appreciate that some of the neighbouring occupiers are supportive of the proposal, I am not aware of any representations in this regard. Similarly, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the occupiers of No 42 would not seek to extend their property to the side or that they are actively progressing any alternate form of extension to the property. Therefore, this does not weigh in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would result in conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR