



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2020

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21st August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/20/3250146

Wayside, Hough Lane, Alderley Edge SK9 7JE

- 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 Laura Earnshaw against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 19/4860M, dated 18 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey side extension to the existing residential property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for 2 storey side extension to the existing residential property at Wayside, Hough Lane, Alderley Edge SK9 7JE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/4860M, dated 18 October 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan Drawing No L001; Proposed Site Plan Drawing No L101; Proposed Floor Plans Drawing No L201; Proposed Elevations Drawing No L302; and Proposed Elevations Drawing No L303.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Laura Earnshaw against Cheshire East Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - Whether or not the proposed extension would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the development plan and the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework);
 - The effect of the proposed extension on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and

- If the proposal is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. The appeal property is a large detached house set in substantial grounds, located within the Green Belt. Policy PG 3 of the *Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (adopted July 2017)* (CELPs) sets out the forms of development that are not inappropriate within the Green Belt. These include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. This policy reflects the guidance found in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the Framework.
5. What constitutes a disproportionate addition is not defined in the Framework but Policy GC12 of the *Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (adopted January 2004)* (MBLP) and its supporting text indicates that for houses in the Green Belt, an increase of above 30% of the original dwelling is considered to be disproportionate. However, larger extensions may be permitted where the proposal lies in a group of houses or ribbon of development and the extension would not be prominent. It is common ground that the appeal property is in a group of houses where the policy allows larger extensions.
6. The dwelling has previously been extended by way of a 2 storey side extension. To the other side of the house is a garage attached to the house by a single storey kitchen extension. There is no definitive evidence as to whether the garage was part of the dwelling as originally built and/or if this existed on 1 July 1948. In the absence of any conclusive evidence regarding this the appellant agrees that it should be counted as an addition to the original house.
7. There are slight differences in the figures provided by the Council and the appellant for the floorspace of the original, current and proposed house, and the appellant has also provided figures depending on whether or not the current porch area is included. The slightly higher figures given by the Council indicate that the previous extensions to the house represent a 77% increase in floor area on the original dwelling. Whilst no upper limit is provided in Policy GC12 of the MBLP, this is clearly significantly greater than the 30% normally considered acceptable.
8. Whilst the appeal scheme proposes a further two storey side extension and alterations to the porch, in order to facilitate this, it would demolish the existing garage and the single storey kitchen extension. As such, even if using the Council's figures, it would only result in an overall increase in floor area of 5 sqm (3%). Moreover, it would result in a more compact form of development, significantly reducing the footprint of the building and creating a gap between the dwelling and the common boundary with the adjacent house. The scale and mass of the extension would also reflect the proportions of the host property.
9. Given this, although the cumulative increase in floor area over and above the original dwelling that results from this and previous extensions to the property is large, I consider that the proposed extension would not represent a

disproportionate addition to the property. As a result, I consider that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Accordingly, the appeal scheme would not be contrary to Policy PG 3 of the CELPS, Policy GC12 of the MBLP or the Framework.

Openness

10. The impact on openness is implicitly taken into account in the exceptions in the Framework, unless there is a specific requirement within them to consider the actual effect on it. Therefore, where the effect of development on openness is not expressly stated as a determinative factor in gauging inappropriateness, such as in paragraph 145 c) of the Framework, there is no requirement in national policy to separately assess the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt.
11. As the proposal would not be inappropriate development, it would, by definition, not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

12. The appeal dwelling forms part of a group of houses along Hough Lane. Although the type and design of the houses vary, they are predominantly large houses set in generous plots. The previous extensions to the property are not overly sympathetic to the design of the host property and result in the built form extending to the boundary of the plot to one side.
13. The proposed extension would increase the scale and mass of the house but would be proportionate to it and by utilising the same roof form the extension would integrate well with the host property. This would make it a sympathetic addition, and, in my opinion, the resulting house would have a more balanced and attractive appearance. In addition, in reducing the footprint of the building, and in creating space between the dwelling and the boundary of the site, the proposal would increase the sense of spaciousness of the plot.
14. The considerable distance the house is set back from Hough Lane, and the mature, tall, evergreen hedging around many of the plot's boundaries means there is little visibility of the house from the public realm, with only glimpsed views possible up the driveway. As a result, the extension would have little visual impact on the surrounding area and countryside. Furthermore, any harm that could be considered to result from the two storey nature of the extension, would be off-set by the reduction in the footprint of the building.
15. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. As such, there would be no conflict with Policies SD2 and SE1 of the CELPS or Policy DC2 of the MBLP which require development to have a high quality of design that reinforces local distinctiveness, contributes positively to the character and identity of the area and respects architectural features of the building.

Conclusion and Conditions

16. The proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and because of this there would be no adverse impact on openness. Nor would it harm the character and appearance of the area.

17. For the reasons set out above I conclude the appeal should be allowed.
18. As well as the standard implementation condition, to provide certainty it is necessary to define the plans with which the scheme should accord. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area a condition to control the external appearance of the extension is necessary.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR