



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2020

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/20/3256303

5 Irons Lane, Barrow, Chester CH3 7LD

- 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 Peter Mellor against the decision of Cheshire West & Chester Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00593/FUL, dated 1 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is a side extension ground floor and dormer.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site lies within the Green Belt. New buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless falling within one of the exceptions described in Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). There is no dispute between the main parties that the development constitutes one of the listed exceptions. Having considered the proposal and visited the site, I concur with that view. Accordingly, it is my view that the development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt and I shall make no further reference to this matter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed side extension on the character and appearance of the building and its locality.

Reasons

4. The site accommodates a semi-detached dwelling set behind a front garden and parking with private amenity space to the rear. The property lies within a row of primarily residential development to the western side of Irons Lane. Here development consists of two distinct phases resulting in replicated house types alongside a small number of interjecting individually styled buildings.
5. Along with another semi-pair and two 4-unit terraces, the appeal site has a distinct 'Arts and Crafts' influenced appearance and is finished in brick and tile. The group shares a high degree of common design features including banding and denticulated brickwork, rendered panels and long 'catslide' roof elements highlighting broad projecting front gables. The roof of the feature gables drop to form a canopy overhanging side-facing main entrances. These features provide strong defining design elements.

6. The proposal would provide additional accommodation at ground and first floor through extensions to the side of the building, and a small forward extension at ground floor.
7. For the main part, the continuation of the existing hipped slope of the main roof would form a second 'catslide' roof over the main body of the extension. This and the formation of a first-floor wall behind the front corner of the original building would maintain a simple form that would reflect the prominent design characteristics of the existing building. The addition of a hipped roof dormer of a modest scale and matching roof pitches set to the rearward part of the roof would appear recessive and limit the bulk at first floor.
8. However, the position of the ground floor accommodation forward of the stepped line of the front elevation would be a prominent element that would alter the consolidated appearance of the dwelling and the symmetry of the semi-pair's frontages. The flush forward alignment of the wall would create a continuous wide element at ground floor that would remove the characteristic successive stepping of the main elevation. In addition, the resultant width would visually compete with that of the front gable to undermine its importance as a focal element.
9. The effect would be exacerbated by the contrived roof form above the forward part of the extension. The wrap-around canopy roof would cause the new first floor wall to appear as a cut out element that would be emphasised by the unusual shape of the resultant side roof slope and line of the roof verge. The effect would be to confuse the simple but strong features of the building's design.
10. Although the extension would appear subordinate in scale, utilise matching materials, including render and quoins to the front elevation that would assist in interpretation, the forward part of the ground floor extension would appear incoherent with the character of the existing building. Although it would comply with some elements of the draft Cheshire West and Chester Council Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings (dSPD), it would mask the forward stepping of the building that, taken with the realignment of the front door, would appear inharmonious and cause a loss of a defining sense of frontage symmetry of the semi-pair. This would contrast with the consistent appearance of the frontages of the wider group of similarly designed buildings.
11. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal would undermine the strong architectural integrity of the existing building and its contribution to the group value of the similarly designed properties in the locality. It would conflict with Policy ENV6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One); Policies DM3 and DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two), the adopted House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2006), and, the dSPD as they require development proposals to demonstrate high quality standards of design and respect the local character of development.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR