



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 December 2020

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/20/3259275

16 Sweettooth Lane, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1BE

- 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 Ms. S. Gloag against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 20/2403C, dated 12 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is new dwelling in residential curtilage of 16 Sweettooth Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. On the banner heading above I have included the appellant's name as it appears on the application form and appeal statement, rather than the different spelling which is used on the appeal form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The proposed single storey dwelling would front onto Plant Street, a short untarmacked road which rises gently from Sweettooth Lane, then levels before joining Victoria Street. Its lack of footways and clearly defined verges gives Plant Street an informal, almost semi-rural character, despite its location within the urban area of Sandbach.
5. The appeal site is adjacent to 2 Plant Street (No. 2), which together with its neighbour, 4 Plant Street (No. 4), are the only houses which directly front onto this side of the lane. Although they are detached houses, the very narrow gap between them means that Nos. 2 and 4 have the appearance of a pair of semis, with a substantial gap on either side. On the other side of the street is an older pair of true semis and a single detached house, which also have substantial gaps between them. The houses are set back from the street behind front gardens, and this, together with the spaces between them, contribute to the street having an open character and a sense of spaciousness.

6. The restricted depth of the appeal site means that, in order to create adequate rear amenity space, the proposed house would need to be sited towards the front of the plot. The property would form an L-shape when viewed from the street, and the front projection, which would contain the bedroom, would protrude beyond the front of Nos 2 and 4 by a considerable margin.
7. The proposed house would be viewed in the context of No 2, and its siting close to the boundary of the neighbouring property would accentuate the discrepancy in the front building lines. Rather than appearing to be a continuation of the existing linear built form, the considerable forward projection of the proposed dwelling, and in particular the bedroom element, would make the house appear as a discordant feature in the streetscene, which would fail to respect the existing character of the area.
8. The side elevation of 16 Sweettooth Lane is closer to the road than other properties along Plant Street, but the presence of a substantial hedge along the boundary means that this single storey property is not a noticeable feature in the streetscene. In contrast, the proposed house would be sited at a higher level and would, in part, be sited further forward. As a result, although it would also be single storey, the appeal property would be far more obvious and prominent within the street scene than the host dwelling.
9. The proposal would provide for adequate separation from 16 Sweettooth Lane, with space for off-street parking for both properties. However, the siting of the proposed house, close to the boundary with No. 2, would erode the important gap at the side of that property. This would result in a continuous stretch of built development along this side of the street which would reduce the sense of spaciousness, causing further harm to the character of the street. This effect would be further exacerbated if the single storey side extension at No. 2, for which planning permission has previously been granted, were to be constructed.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017, which requires that proposals make a positive contribution to their surroundings, and that design solutions achieve a sense of place, by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements. There is further conflict with Policy H2 of the Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan, which amongst other considerations, requires that development is sympathetic to its setting in terms of its relationship to other buildings.

Other Matters

11. I acknowledge that the site is in a location which is close to local facilities, and that there would be no unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. No concerns relating to ecology, trees or access have been raised. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character of the area.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR