



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2021 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/20/3265689

11 Woodpecker Drive, Northwich CW9 8EQ

- 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 S Westwell against the decision of Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01743/FUL, dated 21 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Extensions and alterations'.
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. The description of development above is taken from the planning application form. However, a more precise description is that provided in the decision notice and the appeal form as 'Two storey front and side and single storey rear extensions'. I have considered the appeal on this basis.
4. The Council's decision notice refers to the draft House extensions and domestic outbuildings Supplementary Planning Document. Since the application was determined by the Council this document has been adopted. I am not aware that it has been altered in any substantive manner therefore it has not been necessary to consult the main parties on this matter.

Main Issue

5. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. This appeal concerns a two-storey semi-detached dwelling of similar character and appearance to the surrounding pairs of properties along Woodpecker Drive. Whilst some properties have undergone alterations, there remains good symmetry between the pairs, thus creating a regular rhythm in the street scene.

7. The proposed two storey front extension would be of significant width, extending beyond the existing side elevation of the dwelling. It would also be of a substantial overall scale and would project considerably forward of the dwelling's front elevation, resulting in a prominent front gable at odds with the host roof form. It would therefore introduce excessive massing which would dominate the host dwelling and fail to read as a subordinate addition.
8. Furthermore, due to its significant scale, massing and uncharacteristic projecting gable, this proposal would disrupt the visual symmetry with the attached dwelling and read as an overly dominant and incongruous feature at odds with the well-established layout and design of the properties in the street scene. The proposed alterations to the windows would also be in stark contrast with the attached property.
9. I note the letter of support from the attached neighbour and their intentions to carry out a similar development. However, there is nothing before me to suggest that permission has been granted for alterations similar to the proposal before me.
10. The nearby hotel and the gabled projection of the property at the entrance to Woodpecker Drive are not read within the immediate context of the appeal site, which is predominantly characterised the pairs of semi-detached properties of similar appearance to the appeal dwelling. Furthermore, these are detached properties where differences in design to neighbouring properties can be more easily accommodated without significantly affecting the character of the wider area. While there are other side extensions in the area that do not comply with current guidance, these do not project forward of the host dwelling as the appeal proposal would. As such, these examples do not serve to justify the appeal proposal.
11. The ability to restrict the amount of render used on the external elevations to less than that which may be achieved under permitted development rights, should this appeal succeed, does not overcome the harm I have identified above. Even if more brick were used, the scale and form of the proposed front and side extension would make it a prominent and incongruous feature in the street scene.
12. Taking all the above into consideration, this proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy ENV6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies, Policy DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies and the guidance within the Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings (January 2021) and the Vale Royal Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance 3. Collectively these seek to ensure that extensions respect local character and are subordinate to the original dwelling, amongst other matters.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has requested that a split decision is considered, to allow the rear extension. Whilst the Council has raised no issue with this element, I note from the proposed plans that the rear extension is not clearly severable, either physically or functionally, from the other parts of the proposal. As such, a split decision is not a practical option for me in this instance.

14. I note that the proposal would provide additional accommodation for homeworking. However, these are personal circumstances which can change over time and the development would remain long after such circumstances have ceased to be relevant. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that the harm identified above is necessary to achieve the home office proposed. This matter is not therefore sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Ellison

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR