



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2021 by Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu BSc MSc MIEMA CEnv AssocRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/21/3268642

White Cottage, 104 Bankhall Lane, Hale Barns, Cheshire WA15 0NW

- 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 Jon Wylson & Michelle Wylson against the decision of Trafford Council.
 - The application Ref 102360/HHA/20, dated 24 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is part two storey, part single storey rear extension, relocation of driveway and replacement render to existing gables in white rough cast render.
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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. There is an extant planning permission for demolition of an existing single storey rear extension and the construction of a replacement single storey rear extension¹.
4. Work on the approved development has already begun and construction work was continuing at the time of my site visit. The external walls had largely been completed and construction appeared to be ongoing. I have taken this to be the existing development at the appeal site.

Main Issue

5. The appeal site is located within the settlement boundary and within character zone C of the South Hale Conservation Area (the 'CA'). The host dwelling known as White Cottage itself is not listed but is identified as a positive contributor in the conservation area appraisal on the basis that the building

¹ 101503/HHA/20

reflects the historic development of the settlement in which it stands and reflects the traditional functional character and former uses in the area².

6. The main issue therefore is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host property, and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character of the CA.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. No. 104 is an 18/19th century detached two-storey cottage located prominently by the road south west of Bankhall Lane. Its distinctive character is in its location right by the road and its simple rectangular plan form and modest scale and vernacular appearance. These features contribute to the appreciation of historic development of the CA.
8. The surrounding area is residential and characterised by properties of a variety of dates and architectural styles. These include 17th century cottages and farmhouses, as well as spacious Victorian and Edwardian detached and semi-detached houses; inter-war properties and 20th and 21st century infill and redevelopment. These are mostly set within expansive plots, set back from the road and covered from view by mature trees and hedges.
9. Observations on visiting the site suggest that though slightly set down from the ridge at the rear roof slope, the two-storey extension by virtue of its height and depth would be visible especially on the westward approach on Bankhall Lane. The proposed relocation of the vehicular access will result in the creation of a larger access which would afford wider views to the rear of this elevation.
10. It would not appear as a subservient addition to the cottage. The contemporary design which incorporates rooflights on the east facing elevation and box dormers on the west facing elevation would fail to respect the simple traditional design and form of this cottage. Visualisation images³ contained within the appellant's Grounds of Appeal Heritage Appeal Statement show that the dormers would be visible from the road. Furthermore, the hedges are lower lying than presented in the images and therefore would allow more visibility. Even if it is intended for the hedges to be maintained at the height as visualised, growth would take some time.
11. Rather than appearing as a simple traditional rectangular cottage, the overall built form of the proposal would appear as a larger contemporary dwelling which would significantly alter the simple feel and modest scale of the original cottage. I recognise that there are other larger properties within the area and the scale would not be unusual in the context of that pattern. However, as described above, the area comprises a variety of styles, including more modest cottages, including the appeal site, which reflect the origins and development of the CA. Consequently, the fact that there are other properties of greater scale in the vicinity does not alter my conclusion on the harm caused by the scale of development in relation to the original house. Similarly, whilst the plot ratio of building to garden land would not substantially increase, the harm would arise as a result of the scale of the extensions in relation to the original scale of the cottage.

² South Hale Conservation Area – Supplementary Planning Document SPD 5.21 Conservation Area Appraisal March 2017

³ Visualisation of Proposed Boundary of Bankhall and North Road

12. The relocated driveway with increased hardstanding would add to the sense of a more modern dwelling. Those impacts would be noticeable as one approached the property along the entrance drive and on either approach on Bankhall Lane. The appellant maintains that the driveway and hardstanding could be constructed under permitted development rights. From the information before me it is not clear if that is the case. However, even if the works could be undertaken as permitted development it is not clear that the work would be completed in the absence of permission for the two-storey extension. In any event, that aspect of the proposal would increase the openness of the site and add to the visibility of the extension, as described above. Having regard to the importance of the host dwelling in appreciating the historic development of the CA, the proposal would fail to preserve the character of the CA and cause harm to the designated asset as a result.
13. I acknowledge that the full extent of the hard standing and full depth of the extensions would be out of direct sight of public views. However, a full appreciation of the host dwelling and its historic context does not only arise from the architectural details of the front façade. The landscaped setting is crucial to the understanding of how the property was originally planned and laid out. Even though the impact would not be particularly noticeable from public vantage points it would be felt from within the site and would, nonetheless, cause harm to the setting of the dwelling and how it relates to the wider CA for the reasons given. Whilst the previously approved rear extension will alter the plan form of the dwelling, the addition of a substantial first floor addition would result in extensions that would be more prominent and no longer subservient to the modest scale of the original property. Therefore, having regard to the overall scale and design of the proposal, I find that it would cause harm to the character of the dwelling and the CA.
14. The harm would be less than substantial, having regard to the terms of paragraph 196 of the Framework on account of the fact that the proposal would only affect the rear of the host dwelling and though it would alter the built form of the building, this is not immediately perceptible on the front façade of the building. Nevertheless, taking account of the statutory duty to have special regard to enhancing or preserving the character and appearance of the CA, and the content of paragraph 193 of the Framework, considerable importance and weight must be attached to the harm identified. Where less than substantial harm is identified, the Framework requires that harm to be balanced against any public benefits of the proposal.
15. The appellant contends that the total redecoration and possibly rewiring and re-plumbing of the existing building would amount to public benefits for the site. However, in the context of the proposed development, such work can be undertaken independently of any proposed extension on the site, and therefore public benefits in this instance are limited. On this basis it is not considered that there are demonstrable public benefits that would outweigh the identified harm to the CA. It is also argued that the extension would enable the proposed dwelling to provide a modern family sized home with a good standard of living providing a benefit to the area. Additionally, it is argued that the use of modern construction techniques and materials in construction of the extensions would increase energy-efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, protect the environment and reduce waste. However, there is nothing to indicate that the existing dwelling provides poor levels of accommodation and any environmental benefit

arising from the proposal would be very limited and not sufficient public benefit to outweigh the identified harm in this instance.

16. I find that by virtue of its scale, form, massing and appearance, the proposed part two storey, part single storey rear extension, relocation of driveway would not adequately respond to the character of the host dwelling or its setting. The development would harm the character, appearance and setting of White Cottage 104 Bankhall Lane. It would fail to preserve the character of the CA and the context within which it is experienced. Consequently, it would be at odds with the objectives of Policy L7 of Trafford Local Plan Core Strategy (2012) and the NPPF which seek amongst other things to ensure that new development enhances the street scene or character of the area by appropriately addressing scale, density, height, massing, layout, elevation treatment, hard and soft landscaping works and boundary treatment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR