



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2021

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24TH January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/21/3282854

4 Greenfields Croft, Little Neston, Neston, CH64 0TZ

- 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 Oscar Ratnaik against the decision of Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01173/FUL, dated 16 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey front extension at 4 Greenfields Croft, Little Neston, Neston, CH64 0TZ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/01173/FUL, dated 16 March 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No. 001 Existing Details, Drawing No. 002 Proposed Details, Site Plan and Location Plan and Drawing No. 003 Location Plan.
 - 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.
 - 4) Prior to the conversion of the existing garage, space shall be made available within the domestic curtilage to the front of the dwelling for the parking of a minimum of two cars. This space shall thereafter be retained as such at all times.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey detached house set within a housing estate, comprised of similarly designed dwellings. There is an original single storey front projection comprising a garage and a porch. Like many of the properties on the estate, this front projection has been altered from its original form by adding a hipped roof above it and enclosing the porch.

4. It is proposed to convert the existing garage into a home office and WC, to extend the ground floor across the front of the house in line with the existing front projection and to extend above the existing front projection.
5. I observed during my site visit that almost identical alterations have been made to the same house type in various locations around the estate. Where these alterations have been done well, for example at nearby 26 Greenfields Croft, the resultant dwelling appears as though it was simply a different house type forming part of the original estate. The similar extensions that I saw did not appear to detract from or over dominate the original dwellings and have blended into the estate without causing any harm to its character and appearance.
6. The council suggest that these existing examples of well-designed extensions that are in keeping with the area and form part of its existing character and appearance, should be disregarded as they pre-date its recently adopted Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings (SPD). Whilst SPD's provide useful guidance and advice they are not afforded the same weight as planning policies. Moreover, the SPD does not state that front extensions should not be permitted; it merely explains the reasons why they may not often be considered appropriate.
7. The council also states that the dwelling sits within a uniformed row of houses. This isn't strictly correct. I observed that there are different house types at either end of the relatively short and staggered row of houses within which the appeal property is located. Furthermore, even those properties that were originally of the same design, have been altered to some degree over the years by the replacement of windows, doors, cladding and by a variety of alterations to the front projections and their roofs.
8. Accordingly I find no conflict with policies ENV6, DM3 or DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan or with the general aims of the SPD or the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies and guidance collectively seek amongst other things to ensure that new development is of high quality design, which respects the character of existing buildings and the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

9. Converting the garage would result in the loss of a parking space regardless of whether it is currently used as such or not. However, at the time of my visit I saw no sign of any on street parking problems in the area and I noted that upon completion of the proposals, sufficient space would remain at the front of the dwelling to park two cars. This is a matter that can be secured by a condition to ensure adequate parking is retained in accordance with the council's adopted policies and guidance.

Conditions

10. In addition to the standard condition which limits the lifespan of the planning permission I have specified the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. A condition relating to matching materials is necessary to ensure that the appearance of the new development would be satisfactory. As the garage conversion would result in the loss of a parking

space it is reasonable to condition that another parking space be made available on the frontage of the appeal property to compensate for this.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR