
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2022

by Ann Veevers BA(Hons) PGDip (BCon) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/22/3293600

Whitehouse Bungalow, School Lane, Bunbury CW6 9NR

- 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 N Churton against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 20/5852N, dated 4 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is currently a modest sized plot within the built-up part of Bunbury and contains a small single storey timber dwelling. The character of this part of the village is defined by its linear form along School Lane featuring residential properties of varying age, size and design, generally fronted by gardens, driveways, low stone walls and hedges. There are extensive views across the village cricket ground immediately to the rear of the site, towards open countryside beyond. The size, scale and materials of the present dwelling on the site are not typical of the more substantial brick dwellings in the area but in this position, the building complements the semi-rural feel of this part of the village. This is a positive element of the existing sense of place.
4. The proposed dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling and would almost fill the width of the plot. The overall height of the proposed dwelling, together with the numerous regimented window openings and bookended chimneys emphasise the bulk and mass of the building. The size and formality of the proposed dwelling would be to the detriment of the existing semi-rural feel of the site and its surrounding open space.
5. Whilst there are examples of large, detached dwellings elsewhere in the village, the proposal would be a marked contrast to the immediate surroundings of the appeal site. Although the existing dwelling and surrounding area does not express any significant degree of architectural cohesion, it does have a quintessential rural village informality and includes buildings that have grown organically to incorporate subservient elements. Even if the details of materials

were appropriate, the proposed building does not display similar characteristics or proportions to surrounding properties.

6. The gap between the site and neighbouring dwelling, Gables, is wide, which would result in a clear view of the proposed dwelling, particularly on approach along School Lane and from the cricket ground and open countryside to the rear. Due to the building's height, width and unbroken expanse of roof on the front elevation, it would be a stark feature against the backdrop of the open fields behind.
7. Even though the position of the dwelling would relate well to the street frontage and neighbouring dwelling, its design and scale would not respond to local character and history or reflect the identity of the surroundings as advocated by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Moreover, because of its prominent location, the dwelling would be intrusive and would detract from the qualities of the area. The appellant draws comparison with Gables and although this is an elongated dwelling, the roofline is hipped and its appearance is varied by the use of projecting, almost layered elements.
8. The Framework confirms that great importance should be attached to the design of the built environment. As part of this, development should be sympathetic to local distinctiveness, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. This guidance is clearly reinforced within the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (2017) (DG). In this instance, for the reasons set out above, I consider the proposed dwelling would be neither innovative nor promote local distinctiveness.
9. In relation to the main issue, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would not respond positively to the local character nor would it protect and enhance it. Consequently, this would not accord with the design principles set out in Policy SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan (2017), Policies H3 and LC1 of the Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2030) (BNP) and the DG. As well as the requirements as referred to above, these also seek, amongst other things, to protect and enhance local quality and character.

Other Matters

10. The appeal site is not within one of the important local views or vistas protected by reason of BNP Policy ENV4 but that, as well as the lack of landscape or heritage designations neither weigh in favour nor against the proposal. I have had regard to other matters raised including the neutral effect on living conditions of neighbouring dwellings with regard to outlook and privacy. However, I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusions that the proposal would not be detrimental to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and regardless, I have considered the appeal on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

Ann Veevers

INSPECTOR