



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2022

by Martin H Seddon BSc MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/22/3306253

5 Ashwood Close, Barnston, Northwich CW8 4LY

- 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 and Mrs Lee and Alison Healey against the decision of Cheshire West and Chester Council.
The application Ref: 21/04770/FUL, dated 29 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey side extension, single storey rear extension, front dormer, rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. No.5 Ashwood Close is located in a residential area which includes two storey semi-detached houses and also rows of semi-detached pairs of bungalows. The appeal building is part of a row of five pairs of semi-detached bungalows at Ashwood Close and there are two semi-detached pairs of bungalows at Cherry Tree Avenue.
4. The Council considers that the proposed side and rear extensions would not impact in a negative way or detract from the character and appearance of the area. I see no reason to disagree, having regard to the scale, design and proposed materials for that part of the proposed development. The Council also considers that the proposed rear dormer could be acceptable depending upon its design and use of materials. The Council's reason for refusal concerns the effect of the proposed front dormer window on the character and appearance of the original building, surrounding properties and its settings.
5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings indicates that front dormers may be supported in specific circumstances, such as if they are characteristic of other dwellings in the immediate area. They must also be carefully designed to take account of the local vernacular and characteristics of the existing building.

6. The appellants have referred to appeal decision APP/A0665/D/22/3296142 in which an Inspector allowed a proposed front dormer at No.43 Cherry Tree Avenue. The Inspector noted that the appeal site contained a semi-detached bungalow and immediately adjacent to this pair were a further pair resulting in a group of four bungalows that were read together. He advised that the group was visually discrete from the rest of the development along Cherry Tree Avenue, and as such were primarily read on their own, and in connection with Ashwood Close. The Inspector considered that the proposed dormer would "bookend" the pair of bungalows when taken with the existing front dormer at the bungalow at the other end. As the four bungalows were read as a group, the dormer would balance the group rather than unbalance the semi-detached pair of which the host dwelling formed part. I accept that the standard and form of design for the proposed front dormer permitted at No.43 Cherry Tree Avenue is similar to that in the appeal before me, and that the proposed front dormer has been designed to be in-keeping with the existing rear dormer at No.5. However, although Cherry Tree Avenue is close to the appeal site, the circumstances and development context are different.
7. The semi-detached pair of bungalows including No.43 are situated where Cherry Tree Avenue forms a cul-de-sac and other adjacent dwellings in the row are two-storey in height. No.5 Ashwood Close is part of a row of five similar semi-detached pairs of bungalows extending from the Cherry Tree Avenue cul-de-sac. No.15 Ashwood Close has a pair of pitched roof dormers on its front roof slope, which are relatively small and subordinate in appearance to the dwelling. Otherwise, the front roofs of the bungalows in the row are visually prominent and uncluttered, providing harmony in their character and appearance. The proposed front dormer at No.5 would not "bookend" the row of bungalows or create any symmetry in appearance of the five bungalows concerned, unlike the proposal at No.43 Cherry Tree Avenue.
8. I find that the proposed front dormer would unbalance the pair of bungalows of Nos. 5 and 7 Ashwood Close. It would be an unduly prominent addition in the street scene and would harm the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached bungalows and the row of semi-detached pairs of bungalows at Ashwood Close which form part of the surrounding area. The proposed front dormer would therefore conflict with policy ENV6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that local character is respected through appropriate design. It would fail to conform to policies DM3 and DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) which require development to be in keeping with the scale, character and appearance of the original dwelling, and surrounding area. It would also conflict with the Council's supplementary planning document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings and the objective of the National Planning Policy Framework of achieving well designed places.

Conclusion

9. I have taken all other matters raised into account. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin H Seddon

INSPECTOR