The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2023

by L Wilson BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/22/3307884
Hollyoak, Faulkners Lane, Mobberley WA16 7AL

- 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 English Jones against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
- The application Ref 21/6087M, dated 30 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2022.
- The development proposed is demolition of part front and side wall to facilitate new 2 storey extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's Site Allocations and Development Policies Document was adopted in December 2022 (SADPD), and Policies BE2 and DC2 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (2004) no longer form part of the adopted development plan. The main parties were given the opportunity to comment on the updated policy position and these comments have been taken into account in my assessment of the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. Based on the information presented, the scheme would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would comply with local and national planning policy. The extension would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, in line with Policy PG 3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010 – 2030 (2017) (LP) and paragraph 149 c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). This position is agreed by the main parties.

4. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Mobberley Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. Hollyoak is an attractive semi-detached, two-storey dwelling located within the CA. This part of the CA is primarily characterised by Mobberley Methodist Church as well as semi-detached and detached dwellings set back from the highway behind a grass verge, hedge boundaries and mature trees. The

design, scale, massing and materials of the dwellings vary. Consequently, Faulkners Lane has a varied streetscene.

6. Whilst not referred to by the Council, the appellant has drawn my attention to the Mobberley Conservation Area Appraisal (MCAA) and guidelines in relation to extensions to existing properties. The extension has been designed to be a subordinate addition. Matching brickwork and mortar could be secured by a planning condition. Furthermore, front gables are not an unusual feature along Faulkners Lane.

7. Hollyoak and the attached dwelling (Edge View) have an arts and crafts, cottage style character. They were originally designed as a symmetrical pair, but both have been altered and extended. For example, Hollyoak has a larger front corner extension with a lean-too pitched roof and projection eaves detail as well as a rear extension. Nonetheless, the extensions and alterations have not significantly altered the balance and symmetry of the principal elevation of the dwellings.

8. The massing and scale of the proposed extension would be significantly larger than the existing front corner extension. Due to the siting, massing and scale of the extension it would substantially alter the balance of the principal elevations of the properties (which currently retain a clear sense of balance and symmetry). The addition of a further front gable feature would be a dominant addition that would dilute the simple vernacular style architecture of the pair of semi-detached houses. The proposed extension would imbalance the pair of dwellings and would remove the sense of symmetry. Nearby trees and hedges would provide some screening of the development, but it would still be conspicuous when viewed from Faulkners Lane, especially in winter months. The development would therefore not comply with the guidelines set out in the MCAA because it would not achieve a high standard of design.

9. The proposed front extension would project beyond the principal elevation. I observed on my site visit that there was not a wholly consistent building line along this part of Faulkners Lane. The appellant has also provided a detailed street plan to demonstrate that dwellings along this part of Faulkners Lane are set at a varied distance from the highway. Therefore, the extension would not unduly disrupt the building line and in this regard the proposal would be acceptable.

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to an extension also in the CA[1] which is very similar to the development before me. Limited information has been submitted to make a robust comparison between the two extensions. Nonetheless, that development confirms that an extension such as that proposed does imbalance the pair of dwellings and would remove the sense of symmetry. The extension at The Mount was granted planning permission many years ago and would have been determined against different planning policy. For these reasons, the extension at The Mount does not set a precedent and in any event, I have determined the appeal on its individual merits.

11. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, pair of semi-detached dwellings and the character and appearance of the area because it would imbalance the pair of dwellings and would unduly remove the sense of

[1] 03/0606P

symmetry. Consequently, it would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

12. Framework paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Framework paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Where there is less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

13. Having regard to the varied streetscene, The Mount's extension and the scale of the proposal within the context of the CA as a whole, the level of harm would be less than substantial, nevertheless it is of considerable importance and weight. No evidence has been submitted to clearly show any public benefits. Given the above and in the absence of any defined public benefits, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA.

14. For these reasons, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Consequently, it would conflict with Policies SE1, SE7 and SD2 of the LP and Policies GEN1, HOU11, HER3 of the SADPD. These seek, amongst other matters, to promote high quality design, and state extensions should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, development within a conservation area must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. The scheme would also conflict with chapters 12 and 16 of the Framework which promotes good design and seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character, and conserve and enhance the historic environment and balance public benefits against any harms identified.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has highlighted other matters, including that there were no objections from neighbours, the Parish Council or any other consultees, and the planning officer was satisfied that the development would be acceptable in other regards. The other matters highlighted by the appellant do not change my findings on the main issue in this appeal, and do not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other material considerations, the appeal does not succeed.

L Wilson

INSPECTOR