



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 March 2023

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/22/3313586

5 Eccleston Avenue, Chester, Cheshire CH4 7EX

- 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 Mrs Michele Dunkerley against the decision of Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00375/FUL, dated 2 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is a 'front porch extension and a single storey side extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front porch extension and a single storey side extension at 5 Eccleston Avenue, Chester, Cheshire CH4 7EX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00375/FUL, dated 2 February 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
TQRQM22081192219665; 01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 07; 08; 09; 10.
 - 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.

Preliminary Matter

2. The plans upon which the Council made its decision include a proposed front porch, but also incorporate a separate single storey side extension. Whilst the appellant has indicated on the application form that they consider that the single storey side extension does not require planning permission, the Council made its decision having regard to both the front porch and the single storey side extension. It follows that in the interest of certainty of the development proposed on the plans accompanying the application, I have necessarily amended the description of development accordingly and proceed to determine the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located on Eccleston Avenue, close to the junctions with Hartington Street and Pinfold Court. The semi-detached pair have hipped roofs, distinctive brick and render facades and similar fenestration. As a result, there is a degree of symmetry in the scale, form, materials and detailing of the pair, despite previous extensions to the rear of No. 5 Eccleston Avenue (No. 5) and a single storey side extension to the neighbouring No. 7 that is set back from the front building line.
5. In contrast, the front elevations of immediately surrounding properties in the street scene have significantly different architectural styles, form and materials. This includes the distinctive feature of a prominent front gabled two-storey outrigger at No. 3, an end terraced property within a group that wraps around the junction with Hartington Street. To the opposite side, Nos. 1 and 2 Pinfold Court are a more modern semi-detached pair with pitched roofs facing onto Eccleston Avenue. No. 1 has a distinctive two storey side extension which projects slightly forward of the main building line at ground floor level and is set back at first floor level with lowered eaves and ridge height, whilst No. 2 has a flat roof garage at the side set back from the front building line.
6. The properties immediately opposite are semi-detached pairs with a rhythm of hipped roof designs with distinctive shared front outriggers, albeit the harmony has been somewhat eroded by variations in painted render facades and a variety of front porch additions including No. 16 which includes a wraparound both to the side and onto the front outrigger. The wider character of Eccleston Avenue and the established residential area beyond are even more varied with significant differences in architectural style, form, materials and some variations in building lines evident close by, together with notable examples of a diverse range of front porches, side extensions and car ports.
7. The proposed porch does not meet the specified circumstances where front extensions are supported by guidance in the Cheshire West and Chester Council Supplementary Planning Document: House extensions and domestic outbuildings (SPD), adopted January 2021, as it includes a wraparound projection in front of the main original front wall of the house. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that examples of similar extensions nearby were mostly approved under previous policy frameworks. However, whilst that may be the case, the visible presence of a wide range of different properties in the street scene results in a local character which is not reliant upon a specific harmony or unified appearance of individual buildings, groups of properties or front building lines. The varied architectural styles, building heights, materials, detailing and proportions of properties in the surrounding area rather provide an opportunity for a front porch beyond those typically supported by the SPD, in specific circumstances where I observed that front porch additions with wraparound side returns are commonly found in this particular locality and are clearly capable of assimilating appropriately subject to a suitable design.
8. The proposed addition of a hipped roof front porch with wraparound to the side would alter the comparatively restrained appearance of the unaltered front elevation of the host property and the semi-detached pair. However, when taking account of the varied character of surrounding buildings, I find that the proposal would not appear visually intrusive or out of keeping with the established development in this particular street scene. On the contrary, it would assimilate appropriately with the different architectural styles, form and

materials close by and the variety of front and side extensions, including the presence of a hipped roofed wraparound front porch at No 16 opposite.

9. In reaching the above findings, I have taken into account that nearby examples of large front porches with side returns predominantly relate to partial infills of existing front outriggers and that the separation distance of the proposed front porch and its roof overhang relative to the ground floor front window would have a closer relationship than most others nearby and in the wider area. Nonetheless, the distinctive arched lintel and sill of the existing window would remain discernible features, whilst the positions and proportions of the window and door in the front porch would be compatible and subservient to the ground floor window and the other windows in the upper floor. The overall scale and form of the porch addition would also be subordinate to the main dwelling when viewed against the remaining brick façade at ground floor level and the visual contrast of the rendered upper floor. The suitability of its integration would be further assisted by the corresponding hipped roof design and matching materials as indicated on the application form that could be secured by condition. Consequently, I find that the relationship of the porch to the host property and as part of the semi-detached pair would not be viewed as overly cramped, awkward or harmful in terms of character or appearance.
10. The proposed single storey side extension would have a flat roofed design in a set back position from the front building line behind the porch. Whilst its additional width towards the boundary with No. 3 would result in some visibility within the street scene, it would be a subservient addition in keeping with the design of other side extensions in the wider area. In addition, there is sufficient separation from the side extension and the porch to neighbouring properties to ensure no unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of their occupiers.
11. Having regard to all of the above, I conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. The proposal would not conflict with Policy ENV6 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part One: Strategic Policies, or Policies DM3 and DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan Part Two: Land Allocations and Detailed Policies. The policies, amongst other things, seek a high standard of design that respects the character and appearance, context and protects the visual amenity of the original property, surrounding properties and the wider setting. The policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework to which there is also no conflict.

Conditions

12. To provide certainty of the permission granted, I necessarily impose conditions setting out the standard time limit and to specify the approved plans. In the interests of character and appearance, a condition is also required to ensure matching materials as previously referred to.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would accord with the development plan and the Framework taken as a whole. Accordingly, the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted subject to the conditions set out.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR