



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2023

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/23/3323596

Armstrong Farm, Macclesfield Road, Alderley Edge SK9 7BN

- 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 Michael Summersgill against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref 22/3278M, dated 11 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is refurbishment of existing house with two-storey side extension and rear basement extension, with side and rear extension to existing garage and associated external works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for refurbishment of existing house with two-storey side extension and rear basement extension, with side and rear extension to existing garage and associated external works at Armstrong Farm, Alderley Edge, SK9 7BN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/3278M, dated 11 August 2022, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Alderley Edge Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The CA derives from a prestigious villa estate which followed the construction of the railway and was planned by Sir Humphrey de Trafford estate and built between 1842 and 1910. The 'Alderley Edge Conservation Area & Management Plan' (2022) (CAMP) confirms that the CA is notable for its cohesive, sylvan qualities with its heavily wooded streets and substantial Victorian villas, set in spacious, well-planted gardens. The buildings are varied in style and there is a wide range of materials which reflects the eclectic mix which characterises the CA.
4. The CAMP identifies that the eastern entrance to the CA along Macclesfield Road is characterised by mature planting and that beyond the CA boundary sits beautiful open fields and woodland. The properties on the south side of Macclesfield Road have extensive views over this surrounding National Trust land.
5. Armstrong Farm is one such property and is a large two-storey detached dwelling. The CAMP notes that Armstrong Farm has largely been demolished

and rebuilt but retains an appropriate mature landscape setting, is well screened from the road and is an appropriate scale. I saw for myself the dwelling has a cohesive neo-Tudor style and incorporates high quality materials. There is also a detached garage with accommodation over which has a more contemporary domestic appearance. The further outbuilding on the site is a survivor of the original farmstead and this retains a more rustic appeal. Overall, the buildings at Armstrong Farm and its associated spacious garden reflects the large residences that form the core of the CAs building stock.

6. Following submission of this appeal, the Council has granted planning permission for development of a similar description to the appeal proposal¹. That scheme includes the same two-storey side extension and second floor roof terrace on the dwelling as the appeal proposal. There would be no difference in terms of the way these aspects of the appeal scheme would be appreciated. I also find that the design of these elements would acceptably integrate with the architecture of the existing dwelling.
7. In terms of the rear basement extension, the main external differences relate to the way the external landscaping would be graded next to the basement and that three arched rear facing windows would serve the basement on the approved scheme as opposed to five windows on the appeal scheme. From my own observations these differences would largely only alter how the extension is experienced within the site. From there, the rear elevation of the basement would have a similarly balanced design incorporating red brick and buff stone facing materials to match the host dwelling.
8. Mature vegetation lines the boundary with Edgcroft. Any oblique views from the upper floor windows of this neighbouring property would be of a lawn above the basement and the reprofiled garden. In the latter case, this would match the lowest part of the existing garden thereby appropriately reflecting existing levels.
9. Moreover, from the neighbouring National Trust land, the nearest public footpaths are set away from the appeal site. Together with the relative levels and the intervening hedgerow which sits across the shared boundary this means that the basement extension and garden works would be unlikely to be highly discernible from this neighbouring land. Consequently, they would not have a material effect on the sylvan qualities of the CA or the landscape character of its wider setting.
10. The two-storey garage is already a substantial building, situated in close proximity to the host dwelling. Even so, within the context of the established townscape, forming part of a row of large properties, its form does not appear incongruous. The two-storey side extension to the garage that has been approved by the Council would be of slightly less width to the appeal proposal. However, in publicly accessible views from the National Trust land, its comparable design and close relationship with the main house would be experienced in a similar way to the appeal proposal.
11. The single storey rear extension to the garage would infill the area below an existing terrace and the Council has raised no particular concerns with regards to this aspect of the scheme. Overall, the extensions to the garage would not

¹ LPA Ref. 23/2205M

appear at odds with their context nor would they materially reduce the spaciousness of the plot when compared with the approved scheme.

12. The appellant's Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (July 2022) (AIAMS) surveys 52 trees within the appeal site and proposes the removal of one category B tree of moderate quality and three category C trees of low quality. One of these is a mature twin stemmed Birch located next to the site's southern boundary and I note the National Trust's position that its removal would add to its concerns in respect of the visual effects of the proposals. However, the AIAMS suggests that there is evidence of tip dieback in the crown of that particular tree and that the appellant has concerns over its safety due to recent ground heave.
13. Whilst the loss of the tree next to the southern boundary would be regrettable, the Council's own 'Heritage & Design – Forestry' team have confirmed that having considered the tree species, the physiological condition and issues described, and the limited likely long term future growth potential which can be anticipated, the tree is not considered to be appropriate for formal protection and there are subsequently no objections to its removal. There is no objective contrary evidence before me to suggest I should reach a different finding. Furthermore, the appellant has confirmed that they would be agreeable to replacement planting and this could form part of a landscaping scheme secured through a condition.
14. Taking all the above factors into account, I find that the appeal proposal would not result in any material harm to the character or appearance of the CA or the rural parkland setting of the neighbouring National Trust land. This is particularly so given the similarities between the appeal scheme and the fallback position which would have a comparable relationship with the CA and its wider setting and therefore carries significant weight in my considerations.
15. I conclude, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. In that regard, it would comply with the design, character and conservation requirements of Policies SE1 (Design), SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles), SE4 (The Landscape) and SE7 (The Historic Environment) of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2017), Policies HER1 (Heritage Assets) and HER3 (Conservation Areas) of the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (2022), Policy AE11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Conservation Area) of the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan (2021 - 2030) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matter

16. A third-party has requested that there be no parking by building contractors on Macclesfield Road in the event that the proposal was to go ahead. There is nothing to suggest that such vehicles could not enter the appeal site during development works so as not to obstruct the highway. In any case, any vehicles causing highway safety concerns would be a matter for the Highway Authority to investigate.

Conditions

17. I have attached the standard timescale for commencement of the development and a condition confirming the approved drawings in the interests of certainty and precision. I have also included a materials condition to ensure the details

of materials specified on the application forms and drawings are incorporated. This will ensure that the materials used reflect the quality of the host buildings and their location within the CA.

18. I also consider it prudent to attach similar conditions to those that are attached to the fallback planning permission in the interests of consistency. These conditions are also necessary in the interests of protecting neighbouring privacy, to safeguard biodiversity and to ensure appropriate landscaping is incorporated into the finished scheme. I have also included the tree protection and construction measures condition recommended by the Council's 'Heritage & Design – Forest' team in the interests of protecting the area's verdant character.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given, the appeal is allowed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No. P-001 Rev C (Location Plan), Drawing No. P-010 Rev H (Proposed Site Plan), Drawing No. P-300 Rev C (Proposed Site Section), Drawing No. P-206 Rev F (Proposed Garage East and West Elevations), Drawing No. P-106 Rev E (Proposed Garage Ground and First Floor Plans), Drawing No. P-205 Rev F (Proposed Garage Front and Rear Elevations), Drawing No. P-105 Rev C (Proposed Leisure Suite Basement Plan), Drawing No. P-202 Rev C (Proposed Dwelling East Elevation), Drawing No. P-107 Rev D (Proposed Garage Roof Plan), Drawing No. P-204 Rev C (Proposed Dwelling South Elevation), Drawing No. P-207 Rev D (Proposed Dwelling South Elevation- Illustrative) Drawing No. P-100 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling Basement Plan), Drawing No. P-102 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling First Floor Plan), Drawing No. P-101 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling Ground Floor Plan), Drawing No. P-200 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling North Elevation), Drawing No. P-104 Rev A (Proposed Dwelling Roof Plan), Drawing No. P-103 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling Second Floor Plan) and Drawing No. P-203 Rev B (Proposed Dwelling West Elevation).
- 3) The materials to be used shall be in strict accordance with those specified in the application and approved drawings unless different materials are first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) Prior to first use of the balcony hereby permitted, the 1.8m high privacy screens indicated on Drawing No. P-103 B shall be installed and retained in perpetuity, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5) Prior to the use of building materials, a strategy for the incorporation of features to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposed development is to be

submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The submitted strategy should include proposals for the provision of features for nesting birds including house sparrow and roosting bats and gaps in any fences to facilitate the movement of hedgehogs. The proposals shall be permanently installed in accordance with approved details.

- 6) No removal of any vegetation or the demolition, extension or conversion of buildings shall take place between 1st March and 31st August in any year, unless a detailed survey has been carried out to check for nesting birds. Where nests are found in any building, hedgerow, tree or scrub or other habitat to be removed (or converted or demolished in the case of buildings), a 4m exclusion zone shall be left around the nest until breeding is complete. Completion of nesting shall be confirmed by a suitably qualified person and a report submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any further works within the exclusion zone take place.
- 7) Prior to occupation, a scheme for the landscaping of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme shall include details of hard landscaping, planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with tree, shrub, hedge or grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, the proposed numbers and densities and an implementation programme. The landscaping scheme shall then be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.
- 8) The development hereby permitted shall only be undertaken in accordance with the following tree protection and construction measures:
 - (a) No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the tree protection measures identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement by Tree Solutions (22/AIA/CHE(E)/250) dated July 2022 and Tree protection plan (22/TCS/CHE(E)27 Drawing 03) with measures to be implemented under Arboricultural supervision in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. – Recommendations.
 - (b) No operations shall be undertaken on site in connection with the development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and / or widening or any operations involving the use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the protection works required by the approved protection scheme are in place.
 - (c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within any area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the approved protection scheme.
 - (d) Protective fencing shall be retained intact for the full duration of the development hereby approved and shall not be removed or repositioned without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.