



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2025

by **D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/D/24/3356932

3 Marcliff Grove, Knutsford WA16 6JE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr J Baxendell against the decision of East Cheshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/2696M.
 - The development proposed is a first floor build over side extension, removal of existing canopy and construction of new entrance porch, modification of existing hipped roof to single storey to lean to roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in December 2024 but does not raise any new matters which affect the assessment of this appeal scheme.

Main Issue

3. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling fronting a cul-de-sac of similarly designed dwellings constructed in the 1930s. There is a consistency to the rhythm, character and appearance of these dwellings, including their symmetry and the gaps between each pair of properties. The property has been altered by the erection of single storey side and rear additions and possesses a recessed porch. The proposed development includes the erection of a first floor extension above the side addition.
5. The property is situated adjacent to 2 Listed Buildings comprising St John the Baptist's Church (Grade II*) and Hollingford House (Grade II). The latter building has been altered, including the erection of a 2-storey addition which fronts Marcliff Grove. There is a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest. This duty is echoed in Policy SE 7 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS), Policies HER 1 and HER 4 of the Site Allocations and

Development Policies Document (SADPD) and Policy HE2 of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan (KNP). However, the council has not specifically referred to the appeal scheme causing harm to the setting of the Church. The council's case is focused primarily on the setting of Hollingford House and there are no reasons to disagree with these assessments.

6. Hollingford House comprises the original Georgian 3-storey vicarage which fronts King Edward Road and the 2-storey addition projecting alongside the footway of Marcliff Grove. To the side and rear of the building is a surface area used primarily for parking. There is a question as to whether the addition was erected in the early or middle 20th century but it is part of the Listed Building and is referred to in the Listing Description.
7. As claimed by the appellant, the special historic and architectural interest of this Listed Building is associated with the original house, its contribution to the wider Town Centre (Knutsford) Conservation Area and its previous functional relationship with the Church. There is a gap between the property and the 2-storey addition of Hollingford House which provided a view though to the churchyard. This gap is more pronounced at first floor level because it is currently only a single storey side addition to the property.
8. By reason of being erected above the existing side addition, the proposed first floor extension would not bring the footprint of built development closer to shared boundary with Hollingford House. There would be an increase in the overall size and bulk of the appeal property and there would be a narrowing of the existing gap between the property and the heritage asset at first floor level. However, a gap would remain between the resulting property and the Listed Building.
9. Although part of the Listed Building, the historical and architectural interest of 20th century addition to this heritage asset is less than the original house. The retention of a gap, albeit narrower at first floor level, would ensure that there would be no harm caused to the setting of Hollingford House's special architectural and historic interest. Further, a view would be retained from Marcliff Grove towards the mature trees within the churchyard. Accordingly, the proposed development would not conflict with CELPS Policy SE 7, SADPD Policies HER 1 and HER 4 and KNP Policy HE2.
10. The extent of the Town Centre (Knutsford) Conservation Area does not include either the property or the other dwellings fronting Marcliff Grove. The council has not specifically identified harm being caused to the setting of this Conservation Area in the reason for refusal. There are no reasons to disagree with this assessment and, as such, the appeal scheme would not conflict with SADPD Policy HER 3 and KNP Policy HE3 concerning heritage matters.
11. Although there would not be an increase in the footprint of built development, the proposed extension would not be a subservient addition to the host property. This is because the proposed front elevation of the appeal scheme would not be set rearwards of the host property's front elevation. Further, although there would be a step in the slope of the roof, the initial ridge height of the proposed extension would be similar to the host property. The resulting property would cause unacceptable harm to the consistency of the rhythm, character and appearance of the streetscene along this part of Marcliff Grove.

12. The siting of the proposed 2-storey flank wall adjacent to the shared boundary with Hollingford House would result in the extended 2-storey dwelling occupying the full width of the plot. The council's concerns about the appeal scheme being a cramped form of development on its plot do have some merit. However, because of the property's existing footprint, this matter alone would not be a reason for this appeal to fail but it does contribute in a modest way to the unacceptable harm which has been identified.
13. Further, the scale of the resulting 2-storey addition would have an unbalancing effect on this pair of semi-detached dwellings. This unbalancing would not be so significant so as to be a reason for this appeal to fail but also adds in a moderate way to the unacceptable harm which has been identified.
14. Although there would be no harm caused to the setting of the designated heritage assets, this matter is demonstrably outweighed by the unacceptable harm which has been identified associated with the scale and design of the proposed extension. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene, and, as such, it would conflict with CELPS Policies SE 1 and SD 2, SADPD Policy HOU 11 and KNP Policies D1 and H3. Amongst other matters, these policies require development proposals to be of a high design quality and make a positive contribution to and complement their surroundings, and for residential extensions to be in keeping with the scale, character and appearance of their surroundings and the local area, and be subordinate to the existing dwelling. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR