

Application No: 22/2111M

Location: 1, HILL TOP AVENUE, WILMSLOW, SK9 2JE

Proposal: Proposed demolition of existing detached residential property and creation of 2no. new build 4 bedroom detached residential properties with amended vehicle access

Applicant: Mick Regan

Expiry Date: 17-Feb-2023

SUMMARY

The proposed development seeks approval for the demolition of the existing detached dormer bungalow and the erection of 2 new build 4-bedroom two-storey detached residential properties with amended vehicle access.

The site is within the settlement boundary of Wilmslow and the two-storey properties would not be out of keeping with the surrounding street scene. The loss of the existing dormer bungalow is not considered to have a negative impact on the character or the area.

The second vehicular access would be situated centrally within the front boundary fronting Hill Top Avenue.

The density of the proposed plots would reflect the character of the locality and the design of the proposed dwellings relates well to the character and form of surrounding dwellings.

No issues are deemed to be created by the application proposals with regards to design, amenity, highway safety, trees, ecology or flood risk and drainage, subject to conditions.

Overall, it is considered that this scheme would respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would be in keeping with the street scene. The application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject Conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Application 22/2111M was referred to the Northern Planning Committee at the request of (former) Cllr Don Stockton (Wilmslow Lacey Green Ward) for the following reasons: -

“Background

There has been considerable public interest and opposition regarding this application. (ref. the excellent Material contributions to the website)

This wider interest comes about, not least, because of difficulties in the Avenue and Meade caused by inconsiderate parking. I have applied to spend highways budget (parking restrictions, undecided!) on jctn of Hilltop and Meade, having got them, in the past, on the jctn alongside this proposed scheme.

The credibility of CEC Planning would be best served if this application were to be decided by committee rather than remaining delegated to officers. I believe the following considerations should be weighed by Committee

Material Considerations to be weighed by Committee

1 Overdevelopment of the Site

2 Overbearing No 3 Hilltop

3 The removal of a building IN keeping with local properties

4 Replacement by 2 much larger properties, OUT of keeping.

5 Access (parking) to the proposed sites (plural !)”

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises a detached dormer bungalow with surrounding gardens located in the settlement boundary of Wilmslow on Hill Top Avenue. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two-storey detached dwellings of similar architectural styles, although extensions and alterations have occurred over time. The dwelling to the south of the site is single-storey.

The existing dwelling is screened from Hill Top Avenue and Manchester Road by mature vegetation and the dwelling also benefits from an area of hardstanding and garage.

The application site is situated in the settlement boundary of Wilmslow and within the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Area. The site is at the junction of Hill Top Avenue and Manchester Road.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing detached residential property and creation of 2 x 4-bedroom detached residential properties with an additional vehicle access.

Parking will be contained within the site, to the front and side of the proposed dwellings. The two proposed dwellings would front onto Hill Top Avenue and would include attached garages to the side elevation of both dwellings.

RELEVANT HISTORY

13405PB - Approved with conditions / 27-Jan-1978
DORMER BEDROOM

POLICIES:

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS):

MP 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy
SD 1 – Sustainable development in Cheshire East
SD 2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE1 - Design
SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE5 – Trees, Hedgerow and Woodland
SE13 – Flood Risk and Water Management
Appendix C Parking Standards

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) (Adopted December 2022)

PG9 – Settlement Boundaries
ENV1 – Ecological Network
ENV2 – Ecological Implementation
ENV6 – Trees, hedgerow and woodland implementation
ENV16 – Surface water management and flood risk
GEN1 – Design Principles
GEN5 – Aerodrome Safeguarding
HOU 12 – Amenity
HOU13 – Residential Standards
HOU14 – Housing Density

Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan

LSP1 – Sustainable Construction
NE5 – Biodiversity Conservation
NE6 – Development in Gardens
TA1 – Residential Parking Standards
H2 – Residential Design
H3 – Housing Mix

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Cheshire East Design Guide

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Wilmslow Town Council:

Wilmslow Town Council recommend refusal of this application on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site, out-of-keeping with the street scene and overbearing on the neighbourhood with a particularly negative impact on the Manchester Road elevation which is a key gateway into the town. The removal of screening vegetation further increases the overbearing impact on Manchester Road

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions and informatives

United Utilities

No objection subject to conditions

Highways

No objection subject to informative

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been duly advertised by means of direct neighbour notification letters and site notice. 7 neighbour notification letters were sent on 14th June 2022.

26 letters of representation have been received and their comments can be summarised as follows:

- Out of character on Hill Top Avenue
- Not sympathetic with the surrounding houses
- Removal of the Stone wall surrounding the property would change the character of the Avenue
- Loss of light
- Adverse implications on highway safety
- Noise and disruption to pedestrians during demolition of the bungalow
- Adverse implications on existing trees
- Boundary treatment not in keeping
- Reduction in on street parking
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Overbearing impacts
- Adverse implications on safeguarding biodiversity
- Increase in height would impact on views
- Loss of privacy
- Adverse implications on drainage system
- Adverse implications on landscaping
- Contrary to Policy NE6 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan

In response to the re-consultation exercise, at the time of writing this committee report, letters of representation have been received from 1 address, which raised the following objections:

- Little difference to the previous plans
- Alien to street scene
- Overbearing upon immediate neighbours, harming privacy and loss of light
- No information on the permeability of the drives and paths
- Fails to comply with Policy SE1, SE3, HOU10, HOU12, HOU13, HOU13 AND NE6

In the third re-consultation exercise, 1 letter of objection was received, which raised the following objections:

- Overdevelopment of site
- Concerns regarding removal of hedgerow

- Concerns regarding positioning of new vehicular access

At the time of writing this report, a final re-consultation period was in process due to the changes to the western elevation of Plot 1, to make it an active elevation from the surrounding area.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The application relates to the demolition of a detached dwelling and replacement with two detached dwellings within a residential area of Wilmslow. Policy PG2 defines Wilmslow as a Key Service Centre. Here, development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of each individual town will be supported to maintain their vitality and viability.

The site is located within the settlement boundary and therefore residential development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to having an acceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the area, neighbouring amenities, Highways etc.

Design

CELPs Policy SE1 states that “development proposals should ensure a retained sense of place and management of design quality”. CELPs Policy SD2 further details the design matters that should be considered, including height, scale, form and grouping of development, choice of materials, external design features, massing of development and impact upon the street scene.

Policy GEN1 of the SADPD states development proposals should reflect the local character and design. Policy H2 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan states all new residential development should seek to deliver high quality design through meeting the following key principles:

- Reinforce local character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture and:
- Delivering a scale, mass and density commensurate with the surrounding townscape.

The site is located in the settlement boundary of Wilmslow on the corner of Hill Top Avenue and Manchester Road. It currently contains a detached dormer bungalow, which is not considered to be of particular architectural merit. The site benefits from an area of hardstanding, garage and front and rear dormer windows.

The application seeks to replace the existing detached dwelling with two, two-storey detached dwellings with attached garages. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two-storey detached properties, therefore the construction of two detached two-storey dwellings would not appear out of character with the surrounding area and would be acceptable.

Policy HOU14 of the SADPD, states in determining an appropriate density, the character of the surrounding area (recognising that there are some areas with an established low-density character should be protected) should be taken into account.

The existing detached dwelling is situated on a plot of approximately 1,260.8sqm. The subdivision of the existing plot would result in Plot 1 comprising of 703.5sqm and Plot 2 comprising of 557.3 sqm. The dwelling in Plot 1 would have an approximate footprint of 172sqm while the dwelling in Plot

2 would have an approximate footprint of 162sqm. The development would therefore result in a plot density of 24.4% for Plot 1 and 29% for Plot 2.

The plot densities for the existing site and surrounding dwellings such as No. 2 and 3-5 Hill Top Avenue and No.58-60 Manchester Road range from 17% - 27%. Therefore, the proposed plot densities are similar to those that already exist in the immediate area. The site sections show the ridge heights of the two dwellings would be commensurate with those on Hill Top Avenue, and are much lower than the neighbour to the north on Manchester Rd. The scale of the proposed dwellings would not have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of the area.

Policy NE6 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan states all development seeking to subdivide larger residential plots or gardens should not, wherever possible, result in significant loss of garden space. In order to mitigate the loss of garden space, schemes should seek to meet the following criteria:

- The built form and hard surfaced areas must not exceed 50% of the area of the original plot, unless permeable surfacing used
- All mature trees, hedgerows and other woody species are retained and protected, and supplemented by new native planting
- The landscape proposals developed must meet all 10 Green Biophilic Points set out within Policy SP2, Sustainable Spaces.

As stated above, the site is approximately 1,260.8sqm. The proposed dwellings, areas of hardstanding for parking, and paved areas around the dwellings and to the rear would measure approximately 619.4sqm. The built form and hard surfaced areas would therefore cover 49% of the area of the original plot, and therefore would comply with the first criterion listed above. The existing trees along the western boundary, the tree on the southwestern corner of the plot along the front boundary, the trees in the north east corner and the trees along the eastern boundary are all proposed to be retained. The existing landscaping along the northern boundary is also to be retained and new bushes and low-level planting would be provided along the eastern boundary. The 10 Green Biophilic Points set out in Policy SP2 are listed below. Policy SP2 states development which delivers the following provisions will be looked upon favourably:

1. Inclusion of bird boxes as part of the scheme
2. Inclusion of bat boxes as part of any scheme
3. Inclusion of facilities / habitats for providing homes for amphibians and insects
4. That all external space has sufficient soil depth for the growth of vegetation
5. Include a proportion of nectar-rich species suitable for insects and butterflies
6. Include a proportion of planting species which provide fruit or berries for birds / mammals
7. The inclusion of year-round flowering species within any planting mix
8. Areas of un-managed grassland / planting, including areas for natural succession
9. Inclusions of open water features and marginal habitats as part of the landscape proposals
10. Inclusion of in excess of 80% of native planting and tree species

The above points can be conditioned through the submission/approval of a landscaping scheme for the site and the Nature Conservation Officer has also recommended conditions regarding breeding birds and ecological enhancement. It is therefore felt that the proposal complies with Policy NE6 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plans, subject to conditions.

Plot 1 would comprise of a primary gable roof form while Plot 2 would comprise of a hipped primary roof form. Both dwellings would have front and rear gable projections, a south facing bay window and attached garages. The existing dwelling comprises of a hipped roof, and surrounding properties benefit from hipped and gabled roof forms and front projections. Some dwellings also benefit from integral garages. Therefore, the design and layout of the proposed development would not appear out of keeping with the surrounding area.

Amended plans have resulted in a more active frontage to the west elevation of Unit 1, fronting Manchester Road. The changes have resulted in a two-storey gable projection to the west, cladding to the side gable, and larger windows facing Manchester Road. The changes to the west elevation of Unit 1 are considered to add detail and character to this elevation, making it an active elevation from the surrounding area. This is important due to its positioning on a corner plot to ensure to enhance the streetscape.

The proposed dwellings would marginally exceed the height of No. 3 to the east but would be set down from No. 58 to the rear due to the topography of Manchester Road. The dwellings would therefore be viewed against the backdrop of No. 58 to the north and are not considered to result in jarring additions. The floor levels of the houses will sit over 1m lower than the existing, as shown on the submitted site sections. However, given that topographical levels across the site vary, it is considered necessary to condition details relating to land levels across the site.

The proposed dwellings would sit on a very similar building line to the adjacent properties. The development would therefore not disrupt the building lines present on Hill Top Avenue or Manchester Road and therefore would respect the character and layout of the streetscape.

The existing mature soft landscaping to the western boundary, as well as the existing tree and stone retaining wall to the front boundary would be retained, albeit the stone wall would be altered to accommodate the second vehicular access point. The details regarding the alterations to the stone wall could be assessed through a condition requiring the submission of boundary treatment details. The retention of the existing soft landscaping will help soften the edge of the site, as with the existing scenario, and the retention of the boundary wall would ensure the development remains in keeping with the frontages of surrounding dwellings on Hill Top Avenue and Manchester Road.

The application seeks to construct the dwellings in red/orange brickwork, white render, grey roof tiles and grey uPVC fenestration. The use of red/orange brickwork and render are present to surrounding properties and thus the materials would not result in alien additions to the streetscape. The use of grey roof tiles and grey fenestration are also present to surrounding dwellings on Manchester Road and thus are considered acceptable.

Parking levels are considered to be appropriate for this location and the spaces are located within the residential curtilages. It is not felt that the proposed area of hardstanding would dominate the street scene. The area of hardstanding for parking is well-integrated with landscape elements, reducing the impact of the parked cars on the street scene.

Overall, the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact upon the character of the surrounding area in accordance with policies SE1 and SD2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan, Policy GEN1 of the SADPD, H2 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF.

Living Conditions

CELPs Policy SE1 states that development should ensure an appropriate level of privacy for new and existing residential properties. Policy HOU12 of the SADPD states development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive users or future occupiers of the proposed development due to:

1. loss of privacy;
2. loss of sunlight and daylight;
3. the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings;
4. environmental disturbance or pollution; or
5. traffic generation, access and parking.

Policy HOU13 of the SADPD sets out standards of space between dwellings, which new housing development is generally expected to meet.

The first-floor side elevation windows in No. 3 are obscure glazed. Thus, loss of light in this regard from the construction of Unit 2 would not warrant a refusal. By virtue of the existing boundary treatment, and the presence of front and rear facing windows to the neighbour's ground floor rooms, it is not felt the development would significantly heighten any existing impacts on light exposure to No. 3's ground floor side windows.

The existing hipped roof garage is situated along the shared boundary with No. 3. The proposed dwelling would be set in from the shared boundary with No. 3, and the rear of the site and neighbouring property to the North. The existing garage is situated at a higher ground level than No. 3 due to the topography of the site. The layout of Unit 2 has been amended, resulting in the garage being the closest built form to the shared boundary with No. 3. The development at two-storey level would therefore be set in from the shared boundary with No. 3 by over 5m. The existing dwelling has a finished floor level of 78.200, whereas Plot 2 would have a finished floor level of 76.800.

For the above reasons, the amendments to the scheme are welcomed to mitigate the impacts on No. 3's living conditions and it is not felt the works would have a significant impact on light exposure or significant overbearing impact on No. 3 beyond the existing built form. The reduction in height of the dwelling to the rear as well as the lowered finish floor level would also alleviate any overbearing impacts. The development would not project beyond the front elevation of No. 3 and thus would not harm light exposure in this regard.

There are no ground floor side windows proposed to face No. 3 and the first floor ensuite windows are recommended to be conditioned as obscurely glazed to prevent any overlooking.

Extensions were approved to No. 58 Manchester Rd (to the north of the application site) under LPA reference 21/2456M. From the site visit from October 2022, it is clear that the rear dormer under this application has been constructed. It is therefore considered that the approved works to No. 58 have commenced and therefore must be taken into consideration. No. 58 is situated at a higher ground level than the application site and it is therefore not felt the proposal would have a significant impact on light exposure. All side windows in No. 58 to face the site are secondary windows, further alleviating any impacts on light exposure and outlook. It is due to this change in topography and land levels that it is also not felt the works would have a significant impact on privacy.

Policy HOU13 outlines standards for space between buildings which should be considered in this application. The rear of Plot 1 would be situated over 17m from the side elevation of No.58 which is considered acceptable under Policy HOU13. The front elevations of Plots 1 and 2 would be over 25m from the front elevation of the single storey dwelling to the south, and the side elevation of Plot 1 would be approximately 33m from the front elevation of the dwelling to the west on Manchester Road. The developments are therefore considered to comply with Policy HOU13 of the SADPD.

The development would provide amenity spaces for both dwellings approximately 13m deep, which is considered to be sufficient.

In relation to environmental matters, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has reviewed the application proposals and advised that they have no objections, subject to a number of conditions including the implementation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the specification of all installed gas-fired boilers. These conditions are not considered to be necessary as they are matters covered under building regulations. A number of informatives are also proposed including the hours in which noise generative works should occur and that the Local Planning Authority should be informed of any unforeseen land contamination.

The proposals will not result in unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of adjacent neighbours in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or overshadowing and as such complies with the principles of policies SE1 Cheshire East Local Plan and Policy HOU12 and HOU13 of the SADPD.

Highways

Policy CO1 of the CELPS considers matters of highway safety. Appendix C of the Cheshire East Local Plan identifies minimum Parking Standards for residential development in Principal Towns and Key Service Centres and for the remainder of the borough. The LPA will vary from the prescribed standards where there is clear and compelling justification to do so.

Car Parking

Both dwellings would comprise of 4 bedrooms. Appendix C of the Local Plan states dwellings with 4 bedrooms in Key Service Centres such as Wilmslow require 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling. The proposed site plan indicates that the area of hardstanding's proposed would be suitable to accommodate 2 vehicles for each property and the garages could also be used for parking. The development would therefore provide parking in accordance with the standards.

Access

The proposal for access, which provides similar levels of vehicle to pedestrian intervisibility, as well as vehicle to vehicle intervisibility associated with those of neighbouring properties, is acceptable.

Sustainable Travel

Having regard for the low volume of traffic movements expected to be associated with the proposal, and the location of the site within walking distance of Wilmslow Town Centre, so concerns relating to sustainable travel are raised.

Traffic Impact

The commuter peak hour and daily traffic generation associated with one additional dwelling would not have a material impact on the safe operation of the adjacent or wider highway network.

The Highways Officer raises no objections to the proposal. The proposed development would therefore be in accordance with the parking standards as set down in Appendix C of the Cheshire East Local Plan and would not be detrimental to road safety or result in an undue loss of amenity to other road users.

Landscape

The crux of Policy SE4 (Landscape) of the CELPS is to conserve the landscape character and quality and where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.

It is not considered that the proposals will result in any significant landscape or visual impacts. Should this application be recommended for approval, a condition requiring the submission/approval of a landscaping scheme for the site and an associated landscaping implementation condition will be attached. Subject to these conditions, it is considered that the proposals would adhere with Policy SE4 of the CELPS.

Trees & Hedgerows

Policy SE5 of the CELPS and ENV6 of the SADPD relate to trees, hedgerows and woodland. The objective of the policies is to protect trees that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape or historic character of the surrounding area.

The application site comprises of a detached property located on a corner plot and which is bordered by established tree cover and vegetation although no statutory protection applies to trees on or adjacent to the site. The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (TRE/1HTAW) dated 15th November 2022 which has identified 1 individual and 2 groups of low-quality trees on and adjacent to the site and 1 hedgerow.

All trees and the hedgerow are shown to be retained on the site save for 1 small section of group G1. The Proposed Site Plan confirms that new bushes and low level planting will be provided along the eastern boundary.

The Council's Tree Officer advises that there are no objections to the proposal subject to compliance with the submitted arboricultural information, which can be secured by condition.

As such, the proposal is deemed to adhere with Policy SE5 of the CELPS and Policy ENV6 of the SADPD.

Nature Conservation

Policy SE3 of the CELPS and ENV2 of the SADPD require all development to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. The following ecological matters are relevant to the current proposal:

Breeding Birds

A condition relating to the protection of breeding birds is recommended due to potential impacts arising from the removal of any hedgerow, tree or scrub or other habitat.

Ecological Enhancement

A condition relating to the submission of a strategy to incorporate features to enhance the biodiversity value of the development prior to the use of building materials is recommended, due to the application providing the opportunity for the incorporation of such features.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the proposal would positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity in accordance with policy SE 3 of the CELPS and Policy ENV2 of the SADPD.

Flooding and Drainage

United Utilities have reviewed the proposals and have raised no objections in principle, subject to conditions requiring the submission of a sustainable surface water drainage and foul water drainage scheme, as well as the submission of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan.

Subject to the suggested conditions, the application is considered to adhere with Policy SE13 of the CELPS.

Other matters

In response to points raised by objectors which have not already been addressed:

The presence of noise and disruption during the demolition of the existing dwelling is not a material planning consideration. While the development may result in the loss of on-street parking, the development would include off-street parking provision for both proposed dwellings and thus the development would not heighten any existing pressures on on-street parking. The loss of views within the residential area is also not a material planning consideration.

CONCLUSIONS

For the reasons set out above, and having taken account of all matters raised, it is recommended that this application is approved, subject to Conditions

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Materials in accordance with the application
4. Obscure glazing (the first floor ensuite windows in the western and eastern facing elevations of Plot 2, the first floor ensuite windows in the western facing elevation of Plot 1 and the first floor ensuite windows in the northern facing elevations of Plot 1 and 2)
5. Provision of 4 Car Parking Spaces (pre-occupation)
6. Submission of Bin and Bicycle Storage details
7. Submission of Boundary Treatment and Landscaping Scheme
8. Landscaping (implementation)
9. Breeding Birds survey to be submitted
10. Submission of ecological enhancement strategy
11. Proceed in Accordance with Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
12. Submission of levels details
13. Submission of detailed overall drainage strategy
14. Submission of drainage management and maintenance plan

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add Conditions and/or Informatives or reasons for approval prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

