

Application No: 20/1396M  
Location: 98, ALTRINCHAM ROAD, WILMSLOW, SK9 5NQ  
Proposal: Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of one new replacement two storey dwelling.  
Applicant: Mr & Mrs Neil and Sarah Broomfield  
Expiry Date: 10-Jul-2020

### **SUMMARY**

The proposal lies within a residential area within Wilmslow, where the principle of development is acceptable. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and is not within any designated character areas. The replacement dwelling would be of a contemporary design, which would be different from the houses surrounding it. However, both the NPPF and local policies support innovative design. The streetscene around the site is relatively varied. In this context, subject to conditions regarding materials, finishes, detailing, landscaping and boundary treatments, the development would not be harmful to the character of the area and would comply with the relevant national, local and neighbourhood plan policies.

The proposed development would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties, taking into account the existing relationship. Subject to conditions the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the mature landscaping.

Despite the objections received, the proposal would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision to be made otherwise. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to conditions**

### **REASON FOR REPORT**

The application has been called in by the Local Ward Councillor. The call-in was requested for the following reason:

*“Further to our chat last week and my detailed study of the area around this section of Altrincham Road it seems to me that this proposed development would not be sympathetic to the local character. It would not integrate into its surroundings and would be totally out of keeping with the street scene and general architecture of all other nearby properties.*

*The recently-adopted Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan’s Policy H2 “seeks to reinforce character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture” – this very minimal, avant-garde, contemporary design would look completely alien with its very visual position on a prominent main gateway to Wilmslow where every neighbouring dwelling on both sides of Altrincham Road is of traditional Edwardian style with Cheshire brick walls and pitched slate tiled roofs.*

*I would like to call-in this Application to be discussed and debated by the Northern Planning committee.”*

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is a detached house in a predominately residential area of Wilmslow. The existing property appears to date from the 1930s, like many of the other properties in the vicinity. There is a variety of architectural designs in the surrounding area and a mix of single and two storey properties.

There is mature landscaping along the boundaries of the site. The site backs onto an area of open space, Carnival Field.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing property and the construction of a new detached property. The house would be of a contemporary design. The scheme retains the landscaping along the boundaries of the site.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

04/1178P – approved – 23 June 2004

Two storey rear extension & single storey side & rear extensions

## **POLICIES**

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

PG 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

SD 1 – Sustainable Development Principles

SD 2 – Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SE 1 – Design

Appendix C – Adopted Parking Standards

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

DC3 – Design – Amenity  
DC6 – Design – Circulation and Access  
DC38 – Residential – Space, Light and Privacy

Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

LSP1 – Sustainable Construction  
LSP2 – Sustainable Spaces  
NE5 – Biodiversity Conservation  
TA1 – Residential Parking Standards  
H2 – Residential Design

**OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

Cheshire East Design Guide

**CONSULTATIONS EXTERNAL TO PLANNING**

**Environmental Health** No objections. Conditions relating to ultra-low emission boilers and electric vehicle charging points

**Flood Risk** No objections

**Highways** No objections

**United Utilities** No objections

**Wilmslow Town Council** Object on the grounds that it is out-of-keeping with the street scene and contrary to Policy H2 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan.

**OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Approximately 100 representations received, just over 70 objecting to the scheme, 2 neutral responses from the Wilmslow Civic Trust and Gorseley Bank Primary School, and over 25 in support of the scheme. The points raised are summarised as follows (the points made within the neutral comments were raised in both objections and support letters, so are covered in these sections):

Objections:

Character and Design

- Design and materials used for the proposed development would not be in keeping with the surrounding period Edwardian properties (flat roof, proportions, materials)
- Visually obtrusive and an eyesore from both Carnival Fields and Altrincham Road, which is a gateway into Wilmslow.

- Development does not address cultural and historic characteristics in proximity to the site – Friends Meeting House (grade II\*) and Lindow Common
- Development conflicts with WNP policy H2 and the Cheshire East Design Guide
- The existing property is a period Edwardian property and should be retained and restored. Allowing its demolition would pave the way for the demolition of other historic properties
- The site is on the fringes of Pownall Park – it should be subject to the same planning considerations

### Highways Safety

- The proposal would be dangerous to highway safety.
- The site is near to a crossing used by pupils attending Gorsey Bank Primary School. Construction vehicles backing out onto Altrincham Road and parking on the verge could cause a risk to highway safety.
- Tight space to the front of the dwelling would require vehicles to back out onto Altrincham Road

### Environmental Considerations

- Increase in pollution from traffic caused by construction works
- Not environmentally friendly to demolish and rebuild the existing house.
- WNP supports re-use of buildings and requires demolition to be fully justified.
- Development does not include any evident renewable technologies
- Removal of the Magnolia tree to the front of the site
- Development would disturb the natural habitat of flora and fauna on Carnival Field.

### Issues with plans and drawings

- Proposed plans and 3D models are misleading.
- Plans do not accurately show distances to neighbouring properties.
- No evidence of pre-application discussions.
- No Visual Impact Assessment submitted
- Design and access statement does not comply with the requirements of the design guide.
- Intention to demolish has not been posted

### Amenity Concerns

Development would result in loss of privacy, outlook and light to neighbouring properties. It would not meet the minimum standards of policy DC38.

### Other Matters

- Potential fire risk from cladding – Fire Services should be consulted
- Lack of notification for the public – no site notice posted.
- Application made during lockdown reducing opportunities to discuss the scheme with advisory bodies and people in positions of authority, such as local councillors
- No evidence of any pre-application discussions

## Support:

### Character and Design

- Houses along Altrincham Road are of varying designs and periods, examples of modern designs elsewhere in Wilmslow.
- Site is not part of a Conservation Area. The existing house is not of any particular significance
- Design is a modern interpretation of traditional styles and would add to the neighbouring 1930s and Art Deco Properties
- Development would look different but would not be any larger in comparison with footprint
- Objections are subjective and based on personal taste
- Cheshire East Design Guide is receptive to bespoke housing and NPPF states that planning policies should not seek to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.
- Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design in an area.
- House would be lower in height than the original and surrounding properties. It would be set back from the road frontage. It would not impose in the streetscene.

### Residential Amenity

- Development would not encroach on neighbouring properties

### Other Matters

- Development which creates jobs and economic growth should be supported
- No increase in vehicles or movement as a result of the development
- Disruption during building works inevitable. LPA could control movements during key periods
- Established trees to be retained
- Dwelling focusses on sustainable and renewable sources

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

The application site lies within a predominately residential area of Wilmslow. CELPS policy PG 2 identifies Wilmslow as being a Key Service Centre. Within Key Service Centres, Policy PG 2 supports development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of the individual towns.

There is no objection in principle to a replacement dwelling in this location, subject to compliance with the relevant adopted policies of the development plan.

## Character and design

NPPF paragraph 124 confirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 127 states that amongst other matters developments should:

- function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)

NPPF paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. It also states that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

At a local level, CELPS policy SE 1 requires developments to make a positive contribution to their surroundings. Amongst other matters, design solutions should achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements. It also seeks to ensure sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings. This policy also seeks to encourage innovative and creative design solutions that are appropriate to the local context.

WNP policy H2 also applies, which relates to residential design. This requires all new development to meet a high quality of design, by meeting a number of key principles. The following principles are of particular relevance to the application proposal:

- Reinforcing character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture
- Delivering a scale, mass and density commensurate with the surrounding townscape (particularly for apartment proposals) with sufficient associated amenity space

Cheshire East Design Guide is an adopted supplementary planning document. The first volume sets out a number of key settlement design cues for Wilmslow. It notes that there is a predominance of two storey detached or semi-detached properties. There is a variety of Tudor, Georgian, Victorian and Edward architecture found throughout the town. In terms of materials, Cheshire brick is often used alongside engineering brick for trim detailing and coursing. There are also Tudor elements seen in buildings of various styles and ages.

The second volume focuses on how to implement best practice design. As a scheme for a single replacement dwelling, the chapter on 'working with the grain of the place' is most relevant to this application. It advises that even *"if a contemporary approach is adopted then cues around layout, massing, streets and spaces and even vernacular materials and colour palettes can still be used."*

The NPPF and local policy do not advocate pastiche and also encourage innovation, particularly in relation to sustainable design responses. Consequently, if the design is strong

enough in its context, then it being contemporary and different should not be reason to oppose it per se, especially in an area of already varied townscape character.

This part of Altrincham Road does not lie within any particular character area designation. The existing house is not listed and while an attractive property is not considered to be of such importance to be a non-designated heritage asset. Consequently, while the concerns raised are noted, there would be no legitimate planning reason to object to its removal and replacement.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the impact of the development on the grade II\* Friends Meeting House. This designated heritage asset is located around 200m from the application site. Given the distance and the sylvan frontage of the site and streetscene, the proposed would not result in any adverse impact on its setting.

The area around the application site is dominated by a mix of detached and semi-detached properties; most are two storeys, with some examples of roof extensions. The majority of these properties would appear to be contemporaneous with the application property. There are some later infills, such as the property opposite on the corner of Buckingham Road and Altrincham Road. Properties are predominately red brick, although there are examples of other brick types, render and some elements of dark wooden, horizontal cladding. Many of the road frontages include mature landscaping. Overall, this part of Altrincham Road has a pleasant and established character.

In terms of scale and massing, the proposed dwelling would not appear incongruous with its surroundings. It too would be two storey and of a width comparable with others in the vicinity. It would be set back from the road frontage to a similar level as its neighbours and would be screened by mature landscaping, which is shown to be retained. In these aspects, the proposed dwelling would complement the character and take its cues from the characteristics of the wider streetscene.

The most emotive aspect of the design is perhaps its modern form. This is demonstrated by the high number of representations on this application, predominately objecting. One of the main concerns appears to be the flat roof, or more correctly, a shallowly angled/pitched roof (in effect several shallow mono-pitches converging). Unquestionably this departs from the more traditional forms along this street, but given the varied townscape, it would not appear especially out of place or discordant, when viewed from either Altrincham Road or Carnival Field.

Modern architecture often sits better against a foreground or backdrop of mature landscape. The plans show the mature landscaping around the site to be retained. The retention of the landscaping would help to bed the proposed development into its setting. To ensure that landscaping is retained and enhanced, landscaping and boundary treatments will be required by condition.

The Design Officer has been consulted as part of the application. They are supportive of the scheme subject to conditions, including landscaping as mentioned above. They have however raised concerns regarding the materiality of the scheme at ground floor level. They have advised that a more traditional brick at ground floor level with timber cladding at the upper floors may be a more successful approach in this contemporary design. With

contemporary design, it is essential that the finishes are high quality. Conditions are therefore necessary covering large scale details, materials and finishes.

Taking these factors into account it is considered that the proposal complies with the design policies of the NPPF, CELPS and WNP. Of particular local relevance it is considered that the proposal complies with policy H2 of the WNP as a development that has a scale and mass commensurate to the surrounding townscape and by reinforcing character and identity through locally distinctive design.

## **Sustainability**

Concerns have been raised regarding the sustainability of demolishing the existing house and replacing it. In particular, reference has been made to WNP policy LPS 1, which states that the re-use of existing buildings will be encouraged and the demolition of buildings with a view to redevelopment will have to be fully justified.

The design officer has advised that there is a broader sustainability argument around recycling/re-using existing buildings but that doesn't provide grounds to resist replacement with a new dwelling. However, it may be added justification to get a design that outperforms the original, and that in the longer term will offset the more immediate environmental impact of the building's replacement (i.e. a building with high levels of environmental performance offsetting the loss of embodied energy through demolition of the existing building).

The design and access statement states that the proposed dwelling would incorporate an air source heating system and will maximise the potential for solar gain. They have advised that design aspects such as solar control glazing and recessed window apertures to aid energy conservation.

A subsequent statement has been submitted, which explains the rationale behind the re-use; primarily that it will achieve a better energy rating in the long run. They have advised that even with upgrading the maximum EPC rating for the existing dwelling will be C. They have also confirmed that elements such as the foundations will be reused to limit the required for Portland cement. It is also proposed to re-use existing bricks where possible.

It is considered that the applicant has provided the justification required to comply with the requirements of WNP policy LPS 1.

## **Neighbour amenity**

NPPF paragraph 127 states that developments should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

Saved MBLP policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property. This includes by loss of privacy, overbearing effect and loss of sunlight and daylight.

Saved MBLP policy DC38 provides guidelines of space between buildings.

## 96 Altrincham Road

The occupiers of this property have raised concerns that the development would reduce outlook and light to the windows along their flank elevation. At ground floor level there is a kitchen window, at first floor a bedroom and at second floor a study.

There is currently a garage along the boundary with this neighbour, which extends in front of the ground floor window. The sitting room has windows to the front and rear and a glazed roof. Given the existing relationship between the properties, this room would consequently not be materially harmed by the development.

The proposed first floor window serves a bedroom. Saved MBLP policy DC38 states that between windows serving habitable rooms and flank walls, there should be a guideline distance of 14m. Neither the existing relationship nor the proposed would achieve this distance of separation.

The replacement dwelling would move closer to the boundary. The distance between the built forms of the two properties would reduce from around 9.5m to around 7m.

The new dwelling due to its flat roof form would have a lower overall height of around 6m, compared to approximately 7.5m on the existing dwelling. However, the impact of its existing height is reduced by the hipped form, which slopes away from the boundary.

The proposed dwelling would have an overall height, broadly comparable with the eaves of the existing house. As a result, the second floor window of this neighbour, which sits above the roofline, would not be materially affected by the proposal.

The first floor window would face towards the flank wall of the replacement dwelling. This window serves a bedroom, which is a habitable room. As the built form would move closer to this window, there is the potential for it to impact on outlook and light. The outlook already falls short of the guidelines set out within MBLP policy DC38. However, the overall reduction in height would help to offset the harm caused by the increased proximity.

The existing house has a number of windows along the flank elevation, which face towards this neighbour. As such there is currently a degree of mutual overlooking between the properties.

The proposed dwelling does not include any windows the scheme does not propose any windows along the elevation facing this neighbour. As there are presently windows on the existing house, this would improve the relationship in terms of overlooking.

Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the development would not materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of this neighbouring property and the proposal would comply with policy DC3 of the MBLP.

## 100 Altrincham Road

This neighbouring property does not have any flank windows which would be affected by the development. While the replacement dwelling would extend beyond the rear of this

neighbouring property, the plans show that it would not breach the 45 degree line in plan view when assessed from the closest window. No windows are proposed on the side elevation facing this neighbour.

The proposed scheme would not adversely affect the amenities of this neighbouring property.

### Houses opposite

Concerns have been raised that the proposed development would harm the outlook of the houses opposite the site. Given the setback from the road and the distance of separation, there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of these neighbouring properties.

### **Parking and highway safety**

CELPS Appendix C sets out the adopted parking standards. WNP policy TA1 also requires compliance with these standards. Within Key Service Centres, two spaces are required for dwellings with three or more bedrooms.

The proposed site plan shows two off street parking spaces to be provided. This would comply with the standards set out within Appendix C and required by WNP policy TA1.

Saved MBLP policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It requires vehicle and pedestrian access to be safe and convenient. In particular it requires the adequate provision of visibility splays, provision for manoeuvring vehicle and for vehicles to enter and leave in a forward direction.

A number of concerns have been raised that the development would prejudice highway safety, primarily during construction works. There are concerns that construction traffic, parking on the verge or manoeuvring could prejudice the safety of school children using the crossing or vehicles turning out of Buckingham Road. There are also concerns that the building works could cause traffic to build up along Altrincham Road.

All construction schemes come with an element of temporary disruption. Given that construction works only continue for a finite period, any disruption caused would not provide justification to refuse the development.

The proposed development would use the existing access and space would remain on the site for parking in line with standards, as noted above. There would be no intensification of the access, as it is for a replacement dwelling.

The concerns raised with regards to highway safety are noted. However, the scheme has been reviewed by the Council's highways officer, who has raised no objections.

### **Nature conservation**

The site lies to the west of Lindow Common SSSI. Concerns have been raised that the development does not satisfactorily address this designation. Concerns have also been raised about the impact on the natural habitat of Carnival Field to the rear of the site.

CELPS policy SE 3 relates to biodiversity and geodiversity. The proposal has been reviewed by the Council's Nature Conservation Officer in relation to this policy. They have advised that they do not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development. The proposal would comply with the requirements of policy SE 3.

## **Forestry**

CELPS policy SE 5 deals with trees, hedgerows and woodlands. Schemes which result in the loss of or threat to the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows and woodlands of amenity value would not normally be permitted.

There is mature landscaping and trees along the boundaries of the site. While not protected this landscaping makes a positive contribution to the established and sylvan character of the area.

The proposal seeks to retain the existing landscaping. While it has been noted that a magnolia tree is to be lost, overall, the scheme would retain the amenity value of the landscaping.

The Council's Forestry Officer has reviewed the scheme. They have advised that arboricultural information is required with regards to the impact on the retained trees. This relates primarily to the driveway. They have confirmed that this can be dealt with by condition. Subject to conditions regarding tree retention, protection and method statements the proposal would comply with the requirements of CELPS policy SE 5.

## **Other matters**

Concerns have been raised regarding the potential fire risk from the proposed cladding. This is not a matter for planning. Fire safety would be considered as part of the building regulations assessment.

Concerns have also been raised that the application was made during the government lockdown, following the Covid-19 pandemic. The site notice was not posted until after the government lockdown was eased and the period for consultation was extended.

While the local planning authority recommends that applicants use the pre-application advice service, there is no statutory requirement for applicants to do so. The applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions. However, this is not a reason to refuse the current application. Similarly there is no statutory requirement for applicants to submit an LVIA or design and access statement for an application of this type. There is no requirement for the developer to post intention to demolish on a scheme of this nature. The demolition is included within the planning application.

The inaccuracies with the plans, related to the plan within the legend of some drawings. This has been updated and these plans now reflect what is shown on the proposed block plan.

The application site does not lie within the three parks character area. The policies which apply to developments in these character areas do not apply to the application scheme.

All applications must be judged on their merits. The redevelopment of this site would not necessarily mean that a contemporary design would be appropriate or supported elsewhere.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The proposal lies within a residential area within Wilmslow, where the principle of development is acceptable. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and is not within any designated character areas. The replacement dwelling would be of a contemporary design, which would be different from the houses surrounding it. However, both the NPPF and local policies support innovative design. The streetscene around the site is relatively varied. In this context, subject to conditions regarding materials, finishes, detailing, landscaping and boundary treatments, the development would not be harmful to the character of the area and would comply with the relevant national, local and neighbourhood plan policies.

The proposed development would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties. Subject to conditions the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the mature landscaping.

Despite the objections received, the proposal would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision to be made otherwise. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Three year time limit**
- 2. In accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials and details of finishes**
- 4. Large scale details of windows, doors, roofs**
- 5. Submission of landscaping scheme (hard and soft landscaping)**
- 6. Implementation of landscaping scheme**
- 7. Details of finished levels (spot levels and site sections)**
- 8. Details of boundary treatments**
- 9. Tree retention**
- 10. Tree protection during works**
- 11. Arboricultural method statement**
- 12. Provision of car parking**

*In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.*

