



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

c/o Woodford Community Centre, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 1PS

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Ms Jane Chase
Planning Officer
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
SK1 3XE

29 July 2020

Dear Ms Chase

Reference: DC/077092

Proposal: Erection of extensions to existing dwelling

Location: 505 Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport, SK7 1PR

1. General comments and concerns

- We acknowledge that the existing house is very attractive and the proposal would produce a very grand residence. However, we are concerned that the proposal does not comply with national and local policies and we are keen to ensure that we are consistent in the application of policy principles.
- We note the following reference in the Planning Support Statement: "...the infill property at 512 Chester Road, across Chester Road, has been approved so that dwelling will fill much of the width of the plot." The planning application for 512 Chester Road was submitted before WNF became a consultee, but members of the WNF committee consider that this property is much too large and overbearing in this location and so has a detrimental impact on the character of village. It provides an example of the sensitivity of the location to change due to inappropriate development.
- The site of the 505 Chester Road proposal is in Green Belt and would create a massive increase in the size of the existing property, which is incompatible with the prevailing planning policies at national, borough and local level.
- The proposal would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings.
- The proposal would result in loss of open garden space, which will have an impact on the rural character of the village because it is located in a prominent position on Chester Road and adjacent to the start of footpath 99HGB, which leads into open fields behind the housing line. See Appendix 1-6.
- It would reduce the gap between this dwelling and the one to the east on Chester Road, affecting the street scene. See Appendix 5.
- It would potentially affect the amenity of neighbouring properties by filling open spaces between them with buildings. See Appendix 1-6.
- It does not fulfil any unmet need in terms of type of housing. There is no shortage of large detached houses in Woodford. Planning permission for 920 dwellings + commercial premises + a care facility on the former aerodrome site includes proposals for large numbers of additional large houses.
- A survey conducted by the Forum identified a demand for 2-bedroomed properties. Extension of an already large house is not going in the right direction for meeting that need.

- The Planning statement refers to the NPPF 2019 and the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019, but makes no reference to, or any assessment of, the other relevant Stockport Council Planning policies forming part of the Development Plan for the Woodford area.
- The proposal appears to contravene policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, NPPF, SMBC Saved UDP and Core Strategy policies.

2. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

We are pleased to note that the Planning Statement submitted with the application refers to the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. It refers to WNP DEV3, but WNP DEV4, which is also relevant, is not mentioned.

We have assessed the proposal against policies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan (WNP).

2.1. WNP policy DEV3: Extensions to existing dwellings

“Residential extensions should be in keeping with the host property and its surroundings. Development that would reduce an existing gap between properties should not create an incongruous “terracing” effect.”

Assessment

The addition of a utility room and a boot room along the Chester Road frontage to the east will significantly reduce the gap between the adjacent property at 503 Chester Road, and potentially create a terracing effect. See Appendix 3-6. This does not comply with WNP DEV3.

2.2. WNP DEV4: Design of new development

“All new development in Woodford Neighbourhood Area should achieve a high standard of design. New residential development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s rural character, to its ecology and to its landscape. Where appropriate and viable, the development of sustainable drainage systems, the retention and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and ecological networks and the achievement of high environmental and energy standards will be supported.”

Assessment

The application makes no reference to DEV4. Along this section of Chester Road, large houses are set in large gardens with substantial gaps between buildings. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the rural character of Woodford as the scheme seeks to significantly increase the length of the front elevation and add further extensions to other sections of the property, thus filling much more of the plot with buildings. See Appendix 1-6. This does not comply with WNP DEV4.

3. Flood risk

Woodford is in an area liable to surface flooding. The fields between this property and the aerodrome site are frequently water-logged. Green vegetation absorbs water and helps to reduce surface flooding, while further building will reduce permeability of the ground and exacerbate existing flooding problems. As the atmosphere is becoming warmer and a warmer atmosphere holds more water, climate change models predict more frequent bouts of intense

rainfall in this part of the country. The proposal is not going in the right direction to mitigate the potential for surface flooding.

During the preparation of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan the Environment Agency provided the following information:

“The Environment Agency notes that the Contamination and Flood Risks should be taken into account when considering any development.

Contamination Risk

Due to potential former land use(s), soil and /or groundwater contamination may exist at any site where development is proposed. Associated risks to controlled waters can be addressed by:

- Following the risk management framework CLR11 (15)
- Referring to the Environment Agency guiding principles for land contamination (16) and the land contamination sections in the Environment Agency’s Groundwater Protection: Principles and Practice (17)

Further information may be found on the land contamination technical guidance pages on the direct.gov website (18)

Flood Risk

Developments may require a permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 from the Environment Agency for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within eight metres of the top of the bank of a designated ‘main river’. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. A permit is separate to and in addition to any planning permission granted. (19)

Further to consultation with the Environment Agency, the Neighbourhood Forum would like to see new development being designed to maximise the retention of surface water on the development site and measures to minimise runoff; for surface water drainage to be considered in liaison with the Local Lead Flood Agency, the public sewerage undertaker and the Environment Agency; and for surface water to be discharged in the following order of priority:

- An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system.
- An attenuated discharge to watercourse or other water body.
- An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer.
- An attenuated discharge to public combined sewer”

As requested, we have focussed on assessment against the WNP, but we also noted the following issues with compliance with local and national policies.

4. Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) relevant sections

The site is in Green Belt and therefore subject to Green Belt policies in the NPPF. We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following paragraphs in the NPPF:

4.1. Paragraph 134, which seeks to assist in prevention of encroachment into the countryside. The site lies wholly within the Green Belt with the house and swimming pool currently as two separate buildings at a distance from each other, which allows for some openness within this rural location in Woodford. The proposal would represent a further encroachment into the countryside by new substantial additions to the house and link buildings between the current house and swimming pool.

4.2. Paragraph 143, which seeks to prevent harm to the Green Belt. The site makes some contribution to the openness of the Green Belt at this point. The proposal would have a much greater impact on the openness than the current house and swimming pool due to the scale of development proposed. See Appendix 1-6.

4.3. Paragraph 144, which advises Planning Authorities to give substantial weight to any harm caused to the Green Belt and notes that special circumstances only exist where any harm is outweighed by other circumstances. There are no special circumstances that would justify the harm caused to the Green Belt by this proposal. The outline case put forward by the applicant to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt does not constitute very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm to the Green Belt.

4.4. Paragraph 145 c) which does not exclude the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Planning Support Statement states that “the proposal would result in around 85% increase in volume over the original dwelling or 72% increase if the pool is included.” This is not compliant with the policy.

5. Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following SMBC policies set out in the Unitary Development Plan as being relevant Saved policies for this type of proposal:

5.1. Saved UDP Policy para GBA1.1 which includes Woodford in the extent of the Green Belt.

5.1. Saved UDP Policy paras GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and GBA1.7 which list criteria for the control of development within Green Belt which this application should meet.

5.2. Saved UDP Policy LCR1.1 which does not permit development in the countryside unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area. There is no submitted evidence to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

6. Summary

We believe that planning permission should be refused because the proposal does not comply with WNP DEV3, or WNP DEV4. It fails to comply with the NPPF paragraphs 134, 143, 144 and 145 and with paragraphs GBA1.1, GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and GBA1.7 and policy LCR1.1 in the Stockport UDP. Therefore, it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal is set in a ribbon of well-spaced houses within countryside in a prominent position in Woodford adjacent to the start of a footpath. The proposal represents a massive increase in volume of development, which would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing buildings and there are no exceptional circumstances which justify the harm to the Green Belt. It would be encroachment into green space, which would result in a cramming effect in the housing line and harm the rural character of the locality.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. M. Frearson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee

Appendix

1. Satellite image of the location of 505 Chester Road in countryside



2. Satellite image showing spacing between houses



3. Street view of 505 Chester Road and start of footpath



4. The street scene at 505 Chester Road



5. Existing gap between 505 and 503 Chester Road



6. From the access road leading to footpath 99HGB

