The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2019

by Matthew Woodward BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/18/3215992
5 Arnfield Road, Withington, Manchester, M20 4AQ

- 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 Kurtis Lewis against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref 121062/FH/2018, dated 7 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2018.
- The development proposed is two storey/single storey hipped roof extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached house in a street of properties of similar character. It lies adjoining 7 Arnfield Road and adjacent to 3 Arnfield Road, a detached property. The building line on each side of the street is regimented and there are consistent gaps between each pair of semi-detached houses. Various alterations and extensions are evident to properties in the vicinity, including side extensions.

4. The side extension would be set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling by approximately 0.35m at ground floor and 1.5m at first floor level. It would have a hipped roof to match the existing dwelling. The side projection would reduce the gap between the host property and No 3 to approximately 0.7m. Saved policy DC1.4 of the City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan 1995 (the UDP) guides that side extensions should leave a minimum of 1.52m between the side wall and the common boundary. It goes on to say that proposals which fail to meet this criteria should be assessed having regard to other criteria, including ensuring that extensions do not create a very narrow gap between properties, or result in other unsatisfactory visual relationships between elements of the buildings involved.

5. The proposed extension would unacceptably reduce the gap between the appeal site and No 3, leading to a terracing effect to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. The gap would be much less than that suggested under Policy DC1.4 of the UDP. I accept that the extension would be set-back from the

front of the original dwelling, thus ensuring a subservience to the appeal property. I also appreciate that the gap between the appeal property and No 3 as it exists is less than the gaps between other semi-detached properties on the street. However, having considered these factors, I conclude that the extension would fail to provide the necessary visual relief and the resultant gap between the appeal property and No 3 would be insufficient to appreciate their separate identities. The close visual relationship between the two dwellings in context of the street scene would be unacceptably harmful.

6. I conclude that the proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area. In this respect it would conflict with the City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan 1995 (the UDP) which at saved Policy DC1 states that in determining applications for extensions the Council will have regard to the character of the property and its appearance in the street scene. It would also conflict with the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 (the Core Strategy) which at Policies SP1 and DM1 requires development to have regard to the character of the surrounding area and realise opportunities for good design. I note that the Council reason for refusal did not refer to Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy, but it was referred to in the Council's officer report. I also find that the proposal conflicts with Policy EN1 which seeks to realise opportunities for good design to enhance the image of the city.

Other Matters

7. I have taken into account representations received relating to the potential for overlooking of nearby gardens from the proposed rear extension. I note that this was not included as a reason for refusal by the Council. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for the reasons above, I have not pursued this matter further.

8. The evidence before me indicates that, during the planning application process, the Council requested a more substantial set-back of the proposed first floor element. The appellant has also submitted a sketch comparing the difference between the current proposal with that of an increased set-back and considers that the difference between the two would be limited. However, I am obliged to consider the appeal scheme before me and for the reasons set out above, I have identified that it would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

9. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would provide additional space resulting in a larger family home and that part of the additional space could be used as a study room for children. Whilst these matters carry a little weight in favour of the appeal scheme, in connection with one enlarged dwelling they are limited in scope and so do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

10. Whilst the site lies outside Withington Conservation Area (CA), the boundary of the CA lies immediately beyond the rear garden boundary of the appeal property. The Council did not raise any concerns about the effect of the proposal on the CA. I concur with their view given the position, design and scale of the proposed extension relative to the CA. The appeal scheme would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and its setting in compliance with the duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

Matthew Woodward

INSPECTOR