



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2025

By S Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc) DMS MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/25/3365058

60A Wood Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8BL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mohommed Chunara against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application reference is 141045/FO/2024.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing building and erection of four new detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whalley Range Conservation Area (CA) having regard to matters such as its effect upon the pattern of development in the area, its design and the loss of trees.

Reasons

3. The significance of the CA relates to predominantly large dwellings located within spacious plots and within tree lined streets. Overall, the CA is experienced as being verdant in character and there is an orderly, planned and mainly linear pattern to the position of the buildings within main streets and with most facing towards main roads rather than being inward facing. Many of the buildings have a traditional architectural appearance from the Victorian period.
4. The above positive and distinctive characteristics of the CA as a whole are also evident in College Road and Wood Road which surround the appeal site. In these streets, and while there is the odd exception, there is nonetheless a noticeable and pleasing design coherence to the generally grid pattern and appearance of the development. This includes surrounding brick built dwellings with imposing double height bays, the latter of which are sometimes in a contrasting building material/colour. Roofs are generally unbroken save for the use of characterful brick chimneys. Boundary treatment comprises mainly stone walls and there are plentiful mature trees and other vegetation thereby giving these streets a verdant character.
5. As part of my site visit, I was able to consider the character and appearance of the appeal site and the contribution that it makes to the significance of the CA. The existing detached brick building on the site has a more modern appearance when compared to the more traditional dwellings that exist in College Road and Wood Road. In this regard, the existing building does not add positively to the significance

of the CA in architectural or visual terms. Nonetheless, the existing detached building is positioned within large grounds which includes a significant number of mature trees. The grounds make a very significant contribution to the verdant character of the area, and to the overall spacious environment that exists amongst development within Wood Road and College Road.

6. I understand that about fifteen flats are located within the building and that it was originally built and used as a children's home. It is currently disused, and I do not doubt that there is the potential for some anti-social behaviour to arise because of its vacant state. The Council raise no objection in land use principle terms to the demolition of the building and its replacement with a sympathetic scheme of new dwellings. I have no reason to disagree with this position.
7. Notwithstanding the above, the proposed dwellings would not be positioned in such a way that they would front the street or follow the prevailing building line. They would be essentially inward facing and so would not reflect the prevailing pattern of development in the area. When seen from College Road in particular, the elevations of some of the proposed properties would appear bland and in stark contrast to the architecturally interesting front elevations of the existing properties that appear in College Road.
8. There are large protected trees and other mature trees on the site which would be removed to facilitate the proposed development .
9. Some of the existing mature trees are classed in the submitted arboricultural appraisal as category B trees and hence of '*moderate quality*' and with '*a remaining life expectancy of at least twenty years*'. Their loss would cause harm to the existing verdant and predominantly undeveloped character of a large proportion of the site and, in this regard, the positive contribution that they make to the significance of the CA would be lost. I accept that a lot of the perimeter trees would remain, but many of these trees are deciduous. Therefore, it is not the case that the proposed harmful development would not be seen from public views at all times of the year. Moreover, any replacement trees would be likely to take many years to reach maturity and so I do not find that this constitutes suitable mitigation for the harm that would be caused.
10. In addition to the above, I find that harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area owing to the design of the dwellings. While I appreciate that the designs include gabled elevations so as to reflect the appearance of the existing dwellings in this part of the CA, there is no acknowledgement of other characteristics of the CA such as double height bay windows, general window design composition, use of partly enclosed porches, and the inclusion of brick chimneys. Overall, I find that the proposed dwellings would appear out of place within this part of the CA and would fail to assimilate well with the architectural appearance of the more traditional dwellings that surround them.
11. In reaching the above findings, I note that the appellant has referred to an existing grey brick structure next to the driveway entrance which has an '*office appearance*' and which is '*starkly out of character with the traditional architectural vernacular and provides an important contextual reference*'. I agree that this building generally does not reflect the character and appearance of the CA as a whole. However, I do not consider that it provides an important contextual reference from a decision-making point of view. It is necessary that I consider the proposal based on its effect

on the significance of the CA as a whole and, moreover, I emphasise that the appearance of this building is the exception rather than the norm in this part of the CA.

12. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In the context of paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended) (the Framework), I conclude that less than substantial harm would be caused to the significance of the CA. I find that the extent of the less than substantial harm would be between the lower and upper end of the spectrum.
13. The demolition of the existing building, and its replacement with new dwellings, would deliver some public benefits. It would minimise the potential for anti-social behaviour, boost the supply of family homes in the locality, and would provide economic support to existing amenities and services. It would also remove a building which does not add positively to the character and appearance of the CA. However, such public benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused from the proposed development to the significance of the CA.
14. Therefore, given my reasoning above, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with the design and conservation requirements of policies DM1, EN3, EN9 and SP1 of the Manchester Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012, saved policy DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester 1995, policies JP-P2 and JP-G7 of the Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan Document For Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan (2024) (PfE) and chapters 12 and 16 of the Framework, and the National Design Guide.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with the development plan for the area taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Hartley

INSPECTORkit