MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	140120/FH/2024
Date registered valid:	28 May 2024
Proposal:	Retention of external wall insulation with render finish
Address:	11 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
Ward(s):	Whalley Range Ward
Applicant:	Mr Muazzam Baig, Climate Insulation Limited
Agent (if any):	Mr Tahir Idrees, Climate Insulation Limited
Case officer:	Katie Raw Tel: 0161 234 4164 Email: katie.raw@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**15 July 2024**

Application details

Type of application: Full Householder Application

Development type: Householder

Date of site visit: 7 June 2024

Standard consultations:
No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 5 June 2024 Expired: 26 June 2024

Site notice
No site notice has been produced

Press advert
No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: No

Tree Preservation Order: No

Description of area

The application site relates to 11 Westminster Avenue within the south Manchester ward of Whalley Range. The application site relates to a mid-terraced, red brick, two storey Edwardian dwellinghouse. The property is characterised by a ground floor boxed bay window, decorative red brickwork, decorative canopy running the entirety of the terrace, decorative ridge line of the roof, stain glass window details and white coloured window sills/window heads. Amenity space to the front of the property consists of a small courtyard and amenity space to the rear is again characterised by a small courtyard with the property benefitting from an existing two storey outrigger.

The surrounding area is residential in context and the property sits to the south of Clarendon Road. The surrounding streets to the east and west are characterised by the same terraced formation of properties. The Whalley Range conservation area is sited to the north east of the applicant site.

At the time of the site visit, external wall insulation with a render finish had been installed at the applicant site.

Description of development

The current application seeks permission for the retention of external wall insulation with render finish.

The application form states the works started on 10 May 2024 and finished on 17 May 2024, however there are discrepancies between the colouration of the render finish on site than within the proposed drawings.

The external wall insulation involves the insertion of EPS insulation boards with 90mm thickness and a render finish. The submitted drawings show this would take the form of a dark grey colouration, however on site the render appeared in a pale blue colouration. The render has been applied to both the primary and rear elevation of the host property, also covering the gable wall. No further information was provided during the course of the application in terms of the exact product that has been used at the site.

During the site visit, a white UPVC barge board had been installed to the roof line of the two storey outrigger. This is not considered development and as such, is not included within this application.

Negotiations during the Course of the Application

The application came to light given a complaint to the Enforcement Team for the unauthorised works to the property. The agent was advised the application could not be supported and enforcement action would be taken in due course. The agent offered a similar application for external wall insulation under planning reference: 137171/FH/2023. This was taken into consideration and the agent was advised the LPA would still be proceeding with a recommendation for refusal. The application of 137171/FH/2023 will be discussed later within the report.

Planning History

No planning history exists for this site.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local Residents

Local residents were consulted and 4 responses were received; 3 objecting and 1 in support of the application.

Within the objecting responses, the following concerns were raised:
-The owners should be encouraged to retain the original features of their houses.
-The works are out of character with the neighbouring properties on the street and within surrounding streets.
-The work negatively impacts the house design itself. The loss of original features and changing the shape of the house, including all of the original ornamental brickwork and the traditional red-brick colour. The houses on the street all have deep original windowsills and decorative brick embossments above the windows. These have been removed/plastered over and plastic thin windowsills have been put in. The houses on the street also have ventilation brickwork at the bottom to allow air into the houses and prevent damp. These have been plastered

over. There are gaps where breezeblock couldn't be added and red brick remains, making the overall look inconsistent.
-The house is out of proportion for the property and is no longer flush with the rest of the terrace houses.
-As the property is mid-terraced the proposal is highly evident in the streetscene and the projection is visible from the other houses and from Clarendon Road.
-It does not create an attractive feature within the streetscene.
-If the application were to be approved it would create a precedence and impact the neighbourhood aesthetics.
-The proposal covers historic brickwork with plastic and cement.
-Westminster Avenue and surrounding streets are known locally as the Dukeries. All the properties are built circa 1900s with identical period features. None have been painted any other colour or have altered the features of the houses outside. The houses as existing are attractive, adding to the overall amenity of street and surrounding area.
-Paint will be difficult to protect the elements and will need to be upkept on a regular basis.
-The proposal results in unpleasant views for the neighbouring properties.
-One neighbour suggested other ways in which the house could be better insulated without the need for the external wall insulation.

One comment made reference to 11 Westminster Avenue being located within a Conservation Area. The site does not sit within a designated area but sits close to the Whalley Range Conservation Area, which is sited to the north east of the applicant site.

Issues

POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

The document sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in terms, "For plan-making" and "For decision-taking", (paragraph 11).
Paragraph 8 - Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
a) an economic objective
b) a social objective and
c) an environmental objective.

The following specific policies are considered to be particularly relevant to the proposed development:
i. Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities.
ii. Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places.

The Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012.

The Core Strategy is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. It replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. Of relevance are:

Policy DM1 (Development Management)
Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles)
Policy EN1(Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)
Policy EN4 (Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development)

Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies

Large elements of the UDP have been superseded by the Core Strategy. The following saved policies are of relevance in the consideration of this application:

DC1.1 states that in determining planning applications for extensions to residential properties, the Council will have regard to:
a. The general character of the property;
b. The effect upon the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers;
c. The desirability of enabling people to adapt their houses in appropriate ways to meet changing household needs;
d. The overall appearance of the proposal in the a street scene;
e. The effect of the loss of any on-site car parking.

DC1.2 states that extensions to residential properties will be allowed subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the Plan and the following criteria:
a. They are not excessively large or bulky (for example resulting in structures which are not subservient to original houses or project out too far in front of original buildings);
b. They do not create undue loss of sunlight, daylight or privacy;
c. They are not out of character with the style of development in the area or the surrounding scene by virtue of design, use of materials or construction details.
d. they would not result in the loss of off-street car-parking, in a situation where there is so severe an existing on-street parking problem that unacceptable additional pressures would be created.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance, Adopted April 2007.

The Guide aims to help to develop and enhance a unique and positive sense of place within Manchester and its neighbourhoods. The guidance is grouped under seven key principles recognised by CABE as being those urban design characteristics which create successful places. These are: character and context, continuity and enclosure, ease of movement, quality of the public realm, diversity, legibility, and adaptability. It advises that high quality design is a vital attribute of successful neighbourhoods.

Of relevance are paragraph 2.7, paragraph 2.14 and paragraph 2.16.

Places for Everyone (2022-2039)

Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts and took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on March 21, 2024.

The Plan and its policies are now a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Plan and its policies must therefore be given full weight in the planning balance.

The following policies are relevant:
i.JP- S1- Sustainable development

ISSUES

The current application seeks permission for the retention of external wall insulation with render finish.

It is acknowledged that external wall insulation benefits residential properties, by improving the thermal qualities of the property and as such accords with the broad thrust of the Council's policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions, economy and health and well-being including DM1, SP1 and EN4 of Manchester's Core Strategy (2012) and the NPPF. However, in this instance, the visual harm to the property and the wider area outweighs the benefits of thermal efficiency to the applicant property and as such, the principle of development is not considered acceptable in this instance. For this reason, the LPA cannot support the application and the reasoning will now be discussed.

Visual Amenity

The application site relates to a mid-terraced, red brick, two storey Edwardian dwellinghouse characterised by a ground floor boxed bay window, decorative red brickwork, decorative canopy running the entirety of the terrace, decorative ridge line of the roof, stain glass window details and white coloured window sills/window heads. The surrounding streets to the east and west are characterised by the same terraced formation of properties.

The application of external wall insulation with render finish was confirmed as completed within the application form on 17 May 2024. The resulting render finish on site consisted of a light blue colour, however the plans make reference to a darker grey colouration. Both colour options contrast the existing red colour pallet within Westminster Avenue. However, no RAL or product specification was provided during the course of the application and as such, the report is based on the assessment of the render colouration presented on site- a light blue colouration and confirmed within the application form to be the finished colouration.

The proposal has altered the characteristics of the applicant property. Photos provided by the agent, received on 6 June 2024, document the addition of the external wall insulation and render finish to the property. The finished photos show the loss of several original architectural features of the host property due to the poor application of the render and thickness. This includes, but not limited to, on the front elevation, the loss of window heads and window sills to all the windows and doors, the loss of the red brick horizontal detailing to the first floor and loss of ventilation panels replaced with a white UPVC alternative, and on the rear elevation the loss of the black window sills and decorative window heads and the change of the brick ventilation to a white UPVC alternative. The loss of these features are regrettable. The proposal does not positively enhance the aesthetics of the property as the points of emphasis/interest including detailed brickwork are lost creating flat elevations with little architectural interest.

The introduction of the light blue colouration of the render finish is out of keeping with the existing red brick external elevations for the property. This is to the detriment of visual amenity to those surrounding properties to both Westminster Avenue and the properties to the rear looking onto the back of the proposal, from Marlborough Avenue, in addition to the applicant site.

The blue colouration is also out of keeping with many properties in the surrounding area, including Westminster Avenue which is characterised only by a red colour pallet. The use of render would also contrast the surrounding area in terms of common materials for external elevations. No instances of the insertion of render to the elevations of residential properties could be found through planning searches. The two elements together (blue colouration and render finish) would be considered to be out of keeping with the visual appearance of development in the immediate area and act as an incongruous feature. As the property is a mid-terraced property and both sides of Westminster Avenue retain the red brick and ornate features across the elevations, there is continuity in built form and architectural style. As the property is mid-terraced, the adverse impact is exaggerated as the blue finished render disrupts the rhythm of colouration, materiality and profile in the streetscene, as well as being highly evident from view points along Westminster Avenue.

In turn, the proposal creates harm to the applicant site, the amenity of the applicant site and neighbouring properties and negatively impacts the surrounding character and streetscene, contrary to the City Council's Core Strategy Planning Policies SP1, DM1 and EN1, JP-S1 of Places for Everyone, Policy DC1 of the Unitary Development Plan and Section 8 and 12 of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

Proposed elevations were submitted as part of the proposal and shows the insertion of 90mm EPS boards with render finish. However, no details were provided by the agent in terms of product specification/ details that were used on the property. As such, it is difficult to comment on the product and whether it be considered acceptable to the LPA.

Permitted Development

The proposal is for the application of render in a contrasting colouration and therefore an application for planning permission and the assessment of the works is required. In this instance, there is not a permitted development fallback to consider.

Alternative Proposal

During the course of the application, the agent asked the LPA to consider an application approved at 345 Cheetham Hill Road under planning reference 137171/FH/2023-Installation of external wall insulation with render finish, approved 12 September 2019. This property utilised the same external wall insulation with a brick slip finish, with the same thickness of 90mm. The agent asked whether this would be acceptable for the case of 11 Westminster Avenue. The two properties, albeit in a row of terraced properties, have differences in terms of breaks and architectural features. No.345 Cheetham Hill is characterised by bay windows at ground and first floor level whereas the first floor of Westminster Avenue is flat. No.345 Cheetham Hill Road sits close to the commercial uses with the introduction of different architectural features, whereby no.11 sits in the middle of the terrace of residential dwellinghouses. As such, the LPA considers there to be differences between the two properties, so is not considered to make a suitable comparison to influence the recommendation of this application.

Conclusion

In short, the Local Planning Authority does not support the application for the retention of external wall insulation with render finish. The development is completely out of character in terms of colour and materiality to the host property and the thick profile and poor application exaggerates the visually intrusive feature. In turn, the proposal produces a visually incongruous feature within the streetscene and detrimentally harms the aesthetic qualities of the street and wider area. As such the proposal is contrary to the City Council's Core Strategy Planning Policies SP1, DM1 and EN1, JP-S1 of the Places for Everyone, Policy DC1 of the Unitary Development Plan and Section 8 and 12 of the NPPF.

Other Legislative Requirements
Equality Act 2010
Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Refuse

Article 35 Declaration

The proposal was assessed with regards to policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework, Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies, Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan and other material considerations. In this instance officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, but no acceptable alternative solution was provided. The agent was advised of the department's intentions on the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The retention of external wall insulation with render finish, by reason of its colouration, materials, application, profile and projection forms a visually intrusive feature to the

dwellinghouse. The proposal harms the quality of the building in visual terms, and adversely affects the visual amenity and character of the area. As such the proposal is contrary to the City Council's Core Strategy Planning Policies SP1, DM1 and EN1, JP-S1 of Places for Everyone, Policy DC1 of the Unitary Development Plan and Section 8 and 12 of the NPPF.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

12 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
8 Marlborough Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AJ
13 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
12 Marlborough Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AJ
7 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
14 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
10 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
14 Marlborough Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AJ
9 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
8 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
16 Marlborough Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AJ
10 Marlborough Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AJ
16 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN
15 Westminster Avenue, Manchester, M16 0AN

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA