

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2016

by Anne Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 3rd November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/16/3157847

1b St Marks Street, Levenshulme, Manchester M19 3HG

- 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 Mushtaq Ali against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 111811/FH/2016/N2, dated 7 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "proposed front porch and proposed bedroom and hall way on the rear of the house at ground floor level".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council altered the description of development to "erection of single storey rear extension to form additional living accommodation and erection of front porch extension". As this more accurately describes the development proposed I have also used this description.
3. The submitted plans vary in relation to the footprint shown on the floor plans and the proposed elevations. The floor plans show the extension constructed close to the common boundary with No 1A, whereas the elevations show the works set back a short distance. I have considered the impact of both possible variations in reaching a decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues for the appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of occupiers of the appeal dwelling; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of adjoining residential occupiers.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. St Marks Street is mostly made up of modest red brick terraced housing. The appeal property forms one half of a pair of matching semi-detached houses
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which sit within an infill development of 6 more recently built houses. The appeal property is constructed in red brick to match adjacent dwellings, and is set back from the road by a small area of private space. It has a simple, uncluttered appearance which reflects elements of the traditional housing around it.

6. The appeal proposal includes the erection of what is described as a porch, which would extend to the front boundary of the property. The front door would be repositioned to the side elevation. Due to its width and depth the porch would appear as a large and bulky addition which would sit forward of the established building line. As a result it would appear as a highly prominent feature in the streetscene, the intrusive form of which would detract from the simple proportions of the host dwelling. It would also distort the symmetry of the pair of semis.
7. I note that some older properties on the street have small front extensions which sit within their front gardens. These are set back from the road and occupy only part of the space to the front of the property. As such, they sit comfortably in the streetscene. In contrast the appeal proposal would dominate the host dwelling and due to its position adjacent to the highway would form an incongruous feature in views in both directions along the street.
8. On the first matter I therefore conclude that the proposal would form an unsympathetic and visually intrusive feature which would fail to reflect the form of the host dwelling, or fit comfortably in the established streetscene. In this regard it would conflict with guidance within the *Manchester Core Strategy* (Core Strategy) policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 and saved policy DC1 of the *Manchester Unitary Development Plan* (UDP) which together seek to create well designed places by ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail. It would also conflict with guidance within the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) which has similar aims.

Living Conditions of Occupiers of the Dwelling

9. The rear extension would occupy a very large proportion of the rear garden. Although it would provide a small amount of space for outdoor bin storage and off-street parking, it would provide no usable space for private outdoor amenity or children's play. Having regard to the size of the property, which would be otherwise suitable for a family, the loss of this space would have a significant and harmful effect on the living conditions at the property.
10. I note that the proposal is intended to provide additional living accommodation for the appellant and his family. Whilst I have some sympathy for this need, I have no evidence that the scale of the works proposed would be necessary to meet that need. I am therefore of the view that the loss of the garden space would not be outweighed by the provision of additional living space and having regard to the harm that would arise in this case, it would not be in the wider interest to diminish the quality of the wider housing stock in order to meet the immediate needs of the present occupier.
11. On the second matter I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the living conditions enjoyed by residential occupiers of the dwelling and so would conflict within saved policy DC1 of the UDP and DM1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy which together seek to ensure that the living conditions of residents

are not detrimentally affected by new development. It would also conflict with the Framework, which has similar aims.

Living Conditions of Neighbours

12. The proposal would result in a blank elevation facing the neighbouring property which at its highest point, adjacent to the existing building, would be 3.7 metres in height, sloping to around 2.5 metres. Even if I accept that these works would be set back from the party fence line by a short distance, the height of the extension would be clearly visible from the neighbouring garden, with a large portion apparent above the party fence. It would also extend along the entire length of the adjoining garden which is enclosed on all sides by the back yards of adjoining properties. Due to its length and height the extension would be perceived as overbearing when within the adjoining garden, which is relatively small and provides the only private outdoor space available to the adjoining property. As a result it would significantly diminish the enjoyment of this outdoor space, detracting from the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers.
13. On the third matter I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the living conditions enjoyed by adjoining residential occupiers and so would conflict within saved policy DC1 of the UDP and policies DM1, EN1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy which together seek to ensure that the living conditions of neighbours are not detrimentally affected by new development. It would also conflict with the Framework, which has similar aims.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would harm the living conditions of adjoining occupiers, and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would also have a harmful effect on the living conditions enjoyed by residents of the host dwelling. Therefore having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR