
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2016

by Gareth Wildgoose BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/16/3155148

37 Lock Road, Altrincham, Trafford WA14 4HB

- 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 & Mrs Macklin against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 87950/HHA/16, dated 15 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a rear dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and Linotype Estate Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Linotype Estate Conservation Area is characterised by its distinctive estate plan form of workers dwellings associated to the Linotype Works buildings which are located to its north western extent. The dwellings are predominantly two or three storeys in height and arranged in terraced rows with a distinctive variety of architectural styles. However, there is an intermittent presence of two storey semi-detached and detached properties and modern additions to the estate around the junction of Lawrence Road and Place Road and the junction of Pollen Road and Weldon Road.
 4. The appeal property is a two storey end terrace within a row of four properties of consistent character and architectural style that are located on the eastern side of Lock Road facing the junction with Norman Road. As such, the property both individually and as part of the terraced row makes a positive contribution to the character and historic significance of the Conservation Area.
 5. No 37 is characterised by a front elevation with a distinctive ground floor window and canopy and is a mirrored pair with No 39, including a shared two storey rear outrigger with that property. The adjacent terraced row on Norman Road has different building lines but has a related character of properties in mirrored pairs. The neighbouring terraced rows on the eastern side of Lock Road and along Pollen Road consist of similar architectural styles but different house types. The terraced rows on the western side of Lock Road are of contrasting character and architectural styles.
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6. The Linotype Estate Conservation Area – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD5.7), adopted March 2016, and the Linotype Estate Conservation Area - Supplementary Planning Document: Conservation Area Management Plan (SPD5.7a), adopted March 2016, indicate that the property is covered by an Article 4 direction that removed permitted development rights for, amongst other things, the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse, which includes dormers.
7. Guidance within SPD5.7a under Policy 26 states that 'extensions which alter the form and massing of roofs of the original estate cottages will not be permitted. Loft conversions may be permitted only if conservation rooflights are used and are restricted to the rear elevations of properties'. The appeal proposal seeks to extend No 37 through the addition of a rear dormer with a pitched roof design forming a rear gable, contrary to the guidance in SPD5.7a. To my mind, the locally specific guidance relating to the Linotype Estate Conservation Area and intended restrictions within SPD5.7a are of greater relevance to the interpretation of Policy R1 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (CS), adopted January 2012, than general guidance relating to dormers in the Trafford Council Supplementary Planning Document - SPD4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions & Alterations, adopted February 2012.
8. The rear dormer would adjoin the two storey rear outrigger, with a slight set down from the ridge line of the original roof and would not extend fully to the northern side elevation of the dwelling. Nevertheless, it would occupy the majority of the existing rear roof slope that is visible above the existing outrigger. As a consequence, it would be viewed as an unduly dominant, bulky and incongruous addition to the host property, to the terraced row and those surrounding.
9. The visual contrast with the host property and those surrounding would be worsened by the design and scale of windows which would appear out of place when compared to those visible on the rear elevation at ground and first floor level. The design and massing of the rear dormer would harmfully contrast with the symmetry of original roof forms of the terraced properties which have no existing precedent of dormer additions. The harmful effect would not be mitigated through the use of matching materials.
10. Although the rear dormer would not be visible from the Lock Road, Norman Road or Pollen Road street scenes, it would be clearly visible from a number of neighbouring properties, their gardens and a shared access at the rear. From these perspectives, the rear dormer would adversely affect the character and appearance of the host property, the adjoining terrace and those surrounding.
11. In reaching the above findings, I have taken into account the variation in style, scale and appearance of single storey rear extensions to the host property and surrounding terraced rows. I have also considered the difference in style and appearance of properties in the wider area, together with examples of extensions and other alterations, such as uPVC windows, drawn to my attention. However, the diversity of built form in other parts of the Conservation Area and its wider setting does not offer precedent for or justify the harmful effect of the rear dormer identified.
12. I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the host property, and consequently would fail to preserve the character and appearance of Linotype Estate Conservation Area. The development would,

therefore, be contrary to Policies L7 and R1 of the CS and the associated guidance within SPD5.7 and SPD5.7a. When considered together the policies seek to ensure new development is of design quality appropriate to its context which makes best use of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area, whilst preserving or enhancing the significance of the historic environment, including conservation areas. The policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

13. As the site is in a conservation area, Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Paragraph 131 of the Framework requires that account be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Rather than make the positive contribution desired by paragraph 131 of the Framework, the proposal would harm local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 132 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
14. The harm caused would be significant in terms of the host property and the immediate surroundings of the proposal. However, the harm would be less than substantial to the significance of Linotype Estate Conservation Area as a whole. In these circumstances, paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm be weighed against any public benefits.
15. The public benefit suggested by the appellants is that the development would provide additional living space, including the provision of an additional bedroom, to assist the long term future of the building in meeting modern family living requirements. The dormer is also intended to be built to modern standards and energy efficient. In this regard, although I understand and sympathise with the wishes of the appellants to provide additional space for their family, the public benefits would be limited and not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified.

Other Matters

16. It is common ground between the main parties that the development would not result in a detrimental impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of matters of privacy. Based on the evidence before me, together with my observations of the appeal property and those surrounding, I have no reason to take a different view. However, the absence of concern in this respect is a neutral factor.
17. The absence of local objection and a letter of support for the proposal does not justify the harm identified which would result in conflict with the development plan and the Framework.

Conclusion

18. I have considered the public benefits of the development in assessing the proposal against the main issue. The public benefits identified would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area, including the less than substantial harm to the significance of Linotype Estate Conservation Area.

19. For the reasons given above and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR