
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 March 2017

by V Lucas-Gosnold LLB MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23rd March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/D/17/3169771

257 Green Lane, Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 2LZ

- 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 M Vickerman against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/063644, dated 18 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear and partial side extension including new planting to front garden and reinstatement of vehicle access gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear and partial side extension including new planting to front garden and reinstatement of vehicle access gates at 257 Green Lane, Heaton Norris, Stockport, SK4 2LZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/063644, dated 18 October, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location plan; 257QL/2016/01 'Plans and elevations as existing'; 257QL/2016/02 'Plans and elevations as proposed'.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character or appearance of the Green Lane Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. No. 257 is a two storey end of terrace dwelling. The terrace comprises four properties and is known locally as the 'House of cards'. The appeal dwelling is within the Green lane Conservation Area (CA).
 4. Close to the appeal dwelling, there is a mixture of cottage type and more urban town house style dwellings of different periods which are generally situated in small groups of visually similar buildings. The properties are generally situated
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close together with small front gardens. The use of similar materials in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings along with the common use of boundary walls that line the highway ensure a visually harmonious appearance overall. The character of the area is therefore defined by modest sized dwellings situated in small groups of visually similar properties. The small scale of properties along the lane along with the stone set road surface give the area a somewhat rural feel that distinguishes it visually from the surrounding residential area. The proximity of buildings to one another produces a tight urban grain that is softened by shrubs and planting in the front gardens next to the highway.

5. No. 257, along with the 'House of cards' terrace is not a Listed Building but the dwellings are identified within the CA Appraisal (CAA) as key buildings. Specifically they are referred to as good quality Victoria terrace properties of architectural and townscape importance. The decorative brickwork used in the external surfaces of the dwelling is identified as being a good example of what can be seen in the area.
6. The appeal proposal would see the construction of a rear and part side extension at No. 257. The rear element would measure approximately 6m in length and 6.8m in width where it would wrap around the side elevation of the dwelling. The proposed extension would then project approximately 2.3m beyond the rear elevation. It would be single storey with a sloping pitched roof and a ridge height of approximately 4.5m. The proposal would be set back from the main front elevation by approximately 4.9m.
7. The development proposed would therefore be set back from the main front elevation of the dwelling by a considerable distance. There is a small window in the side elevation of No. 297 and the proposal would not project beyond this. The proposal would also be single storey and the sloping pitch roof design would minimise the visual mass of the proposed extension still further. The proposal would be screened from the majority of public viewpoints in the streetscene by the mass of the neighbouring house and the appeal dwelling itself due to the distance that it would be set back from the main front elevation. In the limited views where it would be visible, namely when stood directly in front of the dwelling, the appeal proposal would represent a small scale addition to the appeal property that would be seen as visually subservient and sympathetic to the original dwelling. The proposed planting would also assist in screening the proposed extension and ensuring it would blend well with the visual appearance of the streetscene.
8. The decorative brickwork on the main front elevation of No. 257 which is specifically referred to in the CAA would not be affected by the proposal. The window in the side elevation would also be retained. The development proposed would therefore not detract from the original features of the dwelling that are specifically referred to as being of merit in terms of the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the CA.
9. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the proposal would preserve the character or appearance of the CA as it would have a neutral visual effect overall on the streetscene.
10. I note the comments relating to the garage at the appeal site. However as this has since been removed, this has not been a decisive factor in my assessment of the appeal proposal.

11. Accordingly, I conclude that the development proposed would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the CA. The proposal would therefore not conflict with policies SIE-1 and policy SIE-3 of the Stockport Core Strategy (Adopted March 2011) (CS), Saved Policies HC1.3 and CDH 1.8 of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (Adopted May 2006), or the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings' (page 29) which, together, seek to ensure that new development such as extensions preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, adopts high standards of design and pays high regard to the built environment within which it is sited.
12. Overall, the proposal would also not conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), which amongst other things, seeks to ensure that heritage assets are conserved (paragraph 17).

Other Matters

13. Policy SD-2 of the CS seeks to ensure that new development undertakes reasonable improvements to the energy performance of the existing dwelling in addition to the relevant Building Regulations. This policy was referred to in the Council's decision notice. However, this was not identified as a specific concern by the Council nor has any reasoning relating to this issue been provided. Based on the information before me, there is little firm evidence to suggest that the proposal would be harmful to energy performance in the area given the small scale nature of the development proposed.
14. Although the Council has raised concerns that the approval of this proposal could set a precedent for other similar proposals in the CA, no specific examples of where this could occur are before me. I therefore attach limited weight to this consideration.

Conclusion and Conditions

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.
16. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in line with the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
17. I have attached a commencement condition and a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans, to define the terms of this permission and for the avoidance of doubt.
18. I have also attached a condition requiring the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension to match those of the existing dwelling to ensure there will be no harm to the character or appearance of the appeal dwelling itself or the surrounding area.

V Lucas-Gosnold

INSPECTOR