

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Paul Singleton BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/17/3166970

Ivy House, 71 Langham Road, Bowdon WA14 3NT

- 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 Wayne Austin against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 89283/HHA/16, dated 28 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing conservatory, erection of part single and part two storey rear extension, minor remodelling of the existing house including new entrance canopy and rendering of existing brickwork, together with replacement of existing gate and railings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing conservatory, erection of part single and part two storey rear extension, minor remodelling of the existing house including new entrance canopy and rendering of existing brickwork, together with replacement of existing gate and railings at Ivy House, 71 Langham Road, Bowdon WA14 3NT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 89283/HHA/16, dated 28 August 2016 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/ illustrations:

RO2-00 Location Plan; RO2-01 Site Plan Proposed; RO2-05 Ground Floor Layout Plan Proposed; RO2-06 First Floor Plan Proposed; RO2-07 Front Elevation Proposed; RO2-08 Side Elevation (West) Proposed; RO2-09 Rear Elevation Proposed; RO2-10 Side Elevation (East) Proposed; RO2-16 Site Plan – Parking; RO2-17 New Metalwork Fencing, Gates and Canopy Support.
 - 3) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (or any equivalent Order following the amendment, re-enactment or revocation thereof) the first floor windows on the side elevation facing No 73 Langham Road shall be fitted with non-opening lights and with textured glass (with an obscuration level of no less than Level 3 of the Pilkington Glass scale or equivalent) to a height of no less than 1.7m above the internal floor level and shall be retained as such thereafter.
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Procedural Matter

2. I have adopted the description of development used in the decision notice and appeal form as providing a clearer description of the appeal proposal than that used in the original planning application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed rear extension on the character and appearance of the appeal property and of the Bowdon Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The proposed rear addition would extend across the full width of the rear elevation of the dwelling but its scale and massing would be reduced because the 2 storey element would be restricted to a width of around 5.5 metres (m) with single storey wings to either side. The roof ridge to the extension would be at the same height of that of the existing main roof. However, the central positioning of the new gable and the inseting of this by about 2m at either end of the rear elevation would ensure that a large expanse of the original rear roof remains visible to either side. Because the 2 storey extension would be set in by this distance part of the existing rear elevation, including the two end windows at first floor level, would also be retained.
5. Due to these design measures the extension would achieve a pleasing symmetry against the background of the retained elements of the rear elevation and main roof. The host building is a detached property of substantial height and scale and, in my judgement, the proposed extension would neither dominate nor overpower the existing dwelling. It would appear as a clearly subservient element and its design would enable the original form of the dwelling to be identified. Although the overall depth of the appeal property would be increased by a significant degree I do not consider that it would be out of scale with the host building or with the adjacent dwelling at Number 69 Langham Road which is of a similar, twin gable form. The proposed addition would not project beyond the main rear elevation of that property which itself has a single storey extension close to the common boundary.
6. I note the Council's concerns that the extension would project further than is recommended in guidelines within the Supplementary Planning Document 4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations (SPD4). However, the specific guidance referred to in the officer's report is concerned with the protection of neighbouring dwellings from overshadowing or potential harm to their outlook rather than with the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
7. In my view the proposed extension would comply with the SPD4 guidance that it should respect the scale of the existing dwelling, should not compete with or appear more dominant than the host property, and should reflect the character, scale and form of the original building. Due to the use of a pitched roof with slate cladding, the arrangement and proportions of the windows and the rendering of the existing dwelling and the proposed addition the extension would complement the host building in terms of its appearance and design.
8. My observations on my site visit are that, although its own plot is relatively large, the appeal property is fully enclosed by built development on the south side of Langham Road and on Gaddum Road to the rear. There are also views

from its rear garden to the apartment building at Church Bank on the higher ground to the north of Langham Road. I do not accept that this part of the village has a particularly open character and, given that the appeal property would still have a large rear garden following completion of the proposed development, I do not consider that the proposal would have a harmful effect in this regard. The proposal would comply with the SPD4 guidance that such development should not result in an undue reduction in the size of the garden.

9. The appeal property is located within the Bowdon Conservation Area but is of relatively modern (1980s) construction and has little individual design merit. Although there are small cottages in small plots along Church Brow this part of the conservation area includes a wide variety of buildings in terms of their age, size and architectural style. The building line along the south side of Langham Road is also quite varied. The appeal property occupies part of the former curtilage to No 69 Langham Road but is not out of place in terms of the gaps between properties along this road. Other dwellings to the rear of the Old Coach House stand further back from the road behind the frontage buildings.
10. The appeal property does, however, stand out in the street scene because its reclaimed red brick elevation contrasts with the more muted brick and render treatment to most of the other nearby buildings. That sense of discordance is added to by the unsympathetic form of the canopy over the front door and the incongruous style of the railings and gates to the front boundary. In its current appearance the building makes a mildly negative contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
11. Because it would be largely hidden from public view the proposed rear extension would not have any material effect on the contribution that the property makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The cottages in the row extending from No 73 to 77 Langham Road are identified in the Bowdon Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are of individual merit in terms of their age and condition. My assessment is that the rear garden to the appeal property does not fall within the setting of any of those buildings and that the proposed extension would not cause any harm to the setting or significance of these non-designated heritage assets.
12. The other works proposed would be likely to have a positive effect. In particular, the application of external render in a light grey finish, the introduction of stone cills to the window reveals and the replacement of the existing windows with white painted timber frames would reduce the extent to which the house contrasts with its immediate neighbours. These changes would result in an external appearance which is more in keeping with that of the other dwellings in this part of the conservation area. The replacement of the front gates, railings and door canopy would also have a positive effect in this respect.
13. The Council appears not to have raised any objection to the proposed wall to the side boundary, the minor extension of the car parking area or the alterations to the pedestrian route from the parking area to the house. I saw nothing on my site visit which would lead me to conclude that any of these works would be harmful either to the character and appearance of the property or to the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

14. I find that the proposal would not cause any material harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or the surrounding area. The proposed rear addition would not affect the contribution that the property makes to the character and appearance of the Bowdon Conservation Area and the overall effect of the minor external alterations to the building would be beneficial. The proposal would, therefore, preserve the character of the conservation area and enhance its appearance.
15. Accordingly I find that the proposal would comply with Policy L7 of the Trafford Core Strategy (2012), which requires that the design of new development must be appropriate in its context, and with Policy R1 which requires that new development should preserve or enhance the conservation area. I have not identified any material considerations that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Having regard to paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework the proposal benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development and should be approved without delay.

Conditions

16. Planning permission is granted in accordance with the terms of the planning application but, in the interests of certainty, a condition is needed to tie the permission to the approved plans. Because the side (north western) elevation of the two storey extension would face habitable rooms within the neighbouring house and its private amenity space a condition is needed to require that the windows proposed in that elevation should have non-opening lights and should be glazed in obscured glass. This is necessary for the protection of the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all matters raised I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Paul Singleton

INSPECTOR