
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2019

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/D/19/3230761

2 Princes Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport SK4 3NQ

- 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 Hayes against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/071648, dated 15 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension and new cellar entrance, alterations to vehicular entrance from Princes Road, new pedestrian entrance from Mauldeth Road and new acoustic fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr & Mrs Hayes against Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Mauldeth Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on the corner of Princes Road and Mauldeth Road within the Mauldeth Road Conservation Area (CA). The CA derives its special character from the development of an affluent, leafy residential area during the nineteenth century, with large detached or semi-detached houses set within substantial gardens with mature trees and hedges along the boundaries. No 2 Princes Road (No 2) is typical of the area, being a large traditional red brick semi-detached property set within a generous garden with well vegetated boundaries, particularly along the Mauldeth Road frontage. The house, which interlocks with No 4 Princes Road (No 4), has primary elevations on both the Princes Road and Mauldeth Road frontages and has attractive yellow brick detailing above the windows and doors.
5. There are a variety of building styles within the CA but the appeal property is similar to the row of semi-detached properties along this side of Princes Road, although it is grander and has more architectural details. The Council's

Conservation and Heritage Team have described No 2 and its interlocking neighbour No 4 as the flagship properties for the development of Princes Road, which would explain their more ornate appearance. Whilst they are not locally listed or specifically mentioned in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA), the properties undoubtedly make a positive contribution to the CA and are of historical interest owing to their role in the early development of the area.

6. Although some of the imposing properties along this side of the road have been altered and extended, they generally have few features on the side elevations to detract from the frontages. Similarly, the main Princes Road elevation of the appeal property appears bold and imposing. This is reinforced by the significant set-back of the existing front porch and two storey element above.
7. The proposed development includes a new single storey front porch and hallway with a bay window. It would reflect the materials and detailing of the host property. However, by bringing forward the front porch and associated steps to just behind the line of the main Princes Road elevation, the dominance of that key elevation would be significantly reduced and it would have an unacceptable visual impact on the host building.
8. The proposed extension at the rear of the property would be primarily located on a less sensitive elevation. Again, it has been designed to respect the features of the host property, with a flat roof, steps up to the door and windows and brick detailing to match the existing. However, by continuing the main building line of the Mauldeth Road elevation, the proposed extension would fail to appear subservient, detracting from and adding a cluttered appearance to this important frontage. The new steps to the cellar and extension doors would project in front of the existing building line which would further add to this harm. Furthermore, the small first floor element with a shallow pitched roof would appear incongruous and out of place compared with the bold features of the host dwelling. Although located on the rear of the property, it would be visible in profile from the Mauldeth Road elevation.
9. I agree that there is significant variety in building styles and architectural detail within the CA and this variety contributes to its character. However, there is an identifiable consistency of form and feature throughout the area which is recognised in the CACA. Such features together define the character of the CA and it is important that any extensions and alterations to existing buildings respect these qualities. In this particular case, the strong imposing elevations are an important feature of this building and a characteristic of the CA which the proposed scheme fails to respect.
10. I accept that the existing vegetation along the boundaries provides screening, particularly along Mauldeth Road, nevertheless, the property is visible from the street and both main elevations can readily be seen from Princes Road. I note the proposal includes planting along the Princes Road frontage, but the property would still be visible from the entrance, even if the proposed hedge grew to a reasonable height which would, in any case, take time.
11. The appellants have directed me to a number of examples of other extensions in the area which have recently been granted planning permission. I have not been provided with the plans for any of the examples so cannot assess them in detail. However, it appears from the planning officer's report that the side and rear extension permitted at 10 Princes Road would replace an existing

- extension, and the detached garage would mirror one at the adjacent property 12 Princes Road. According to the information which has been provided to me, the extension permitted at 17 Princes Road would be at the rear of the property and would not be visible from the wider CA. The proposed single storey side and rear extension at No 23 Princes Road would be set back significantly from the front elevation and would replace an existing garage. They are all materially different to the appeal proposal but in any event, I am not bound by other decisions of the Council.
12. The proposed development involves alterations to the accesses and the replacement of part of the garden on the Princes Road frontage with a larger area of hardstanding for parking in front of the house. I consider the changes to the access arrangements to be acceptable. However, given the importance of the gardens and soft landscaping to the character of the street and the wider CA the significant enlargement of the hardstanding area would exacerbate the harm already identified.
 13. On my site visit I saw that any previous vegetation along the Princes Road frontage had been cleared. I note that additional planting is proposed along the Princes Road boundary, but this would not fully mitigate the harm caused by the overall loss of soft landscaping.
 14. The remaining trees on the site are identified on the site plan and I am satisfied that, with the appropriate protection in place, they would not be adversely affected by the proposed development or its construction.
 15. For the reasons given I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Mauldeth Road Conservation Area. With regard to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), this harm would be less than substantial. Even so this still amounts to a harmful impact which would adversely affect the significance of the designated heritage asset. Paragraph 193 of the Framework requires that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the level of harm.
 16. The Framework requires that harm to the CA should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellants have suggested that such benefits include the need to provide a home which is fit for the purpose of a family dwelling. Whilst I accept the need for good quality housing accommodation which also sustains the significance of the CA, the enlargement of a private property does not constitute a public benefit. Similarly, whilst concerns about crime are understandable, measures to improve the security of the property would not have a wider public benefit. I give these matters minimal weight. I note the comments of the Council's highways engineer about the potential for the proposed access arrangements to improve inter-visibility between road users of the premises and adjacent highway. Whilst this could be a public benefit it would be a modest one which would not outweigh the harm to the CA.
 17. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy SIE-1 of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD 2011 which requires, amongst other considerations, that development should incorporate the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment, and Policy SIE-3 regarding protection of the historic environment. Furthermore it conflicts with saved Policy HC1.3 of the Stockport

Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 regarding development in conservation areas; Policy CDH1.8 concerning residential extensions and guidance on development with conservation areas contained within the Supplementary Planning Document 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings'. In addition to the above, the proposed development conflicts with section 16 of the Framework regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment and section 12 relating to high quality design.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Rosie Morgan

INSPECTOR