



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2019

by Beverley Wilders BA (Hons) PgDurp MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/19/3233690

32 Salisbury Road, Manchester M21 0SL

- 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 O Yaseen against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 123171/FO/2019, dated 28 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use of existing property into 6 self-contained apartments, with rear and side extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area;
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties having particular regard to noise and disturbance;
 - the mix and balance of housing provision in the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a substantial Victorian semi-detached property located in a prominent corner position at the junction of Salisbury Road and Buckingham Road. The host building is traditional in its form and appearance and is constructed from brick under a slate tiled roof. Existing landscaping along the Buckingham Road boundary provides some screening of the side and rear elevation of the building. The immediate surrounding area comprises buildings of a similar scale and appearance along Salisbury Road, Silverdale Road and Westfield Road with more modestly proportioned properties on Buckingham Road.
4. The design and massing of the host building is such that whilst there are existing side and rear projections from it, these are subservient to the main three storey gable feature and roof of the building. The proposal seeks to extend the building on four levels and due to the particular design and massing of the extensions, would significantly increase the bulk of the existing building.

- The height of the side gable would be increased and the height of its roof would match the height of the main roof. Alterations and extensions to the side and rear would result in a cluttered appearance to the side elevation which would become more prominent in the streetscene as a result of its increased size and depth and the removal of existing landscaping. Due to the scale and design of the proposed extensions and alterations and notwithstanding that matching materials would be used, the proposal would be harmful to the traditional character and appearance of the host building and to the surrounding area.
5. In reaching its decision the Council also raised concerns regarding the proposed car parking area. Although it would be larger than the existing parking area, it would be partly screened by existing and proposed boundary treatment and I do not consider that it would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area or that it would represent overdevelopment of the site.
 6. My attention has been drawn by the appellant to a development nearby at 22 Silverdale Road and I have been provided with copies of various documentation relating to that development. I observed this property at my site visit. However, having reviewed the submitted plans and Council's Officer Report for the development at Silverdale Road it appears that the alterations and extensions proposed to that property were relatively minor and not of the scale proposed by the appeal proposal. The two developments are not therefore directly comparable and I attach limited weight to the example referred to. In any event, I must determine the proposal before me on its own merits. Whilst the property at Silverdale Road contributes to the overall character of the area, it does not justify the scale and nature of the extensions and alterations proposed which, for the reasons stated above would be harmful to the host building and surrounding area.
 7. Taking the above matters into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It is therefore contrary to policies SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted July 2012 (CS), to relevant paragraphs within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and to relevant guidance within the Council's Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance adopted April 2007 (SPD). These policies and this guidance seek, amongst other things, well designed places and appropriate scale, form and massing which has regard to the character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

8. The appeal site is located within an established residential area and at my site visit I observed that most properties nearby appear to be in use as single dwellings with no obvious evidence of subdivision. Although located at the end of the road, the host building adjoins a similar property at No 30 with its rear garden adjoining the rear garden of the neighbouring property as well as the gardens of properties on Westfield Road. Whilst the appellant describes the area as being vibrant, at the time of my visit I observed it to be a quiet residential area with limited comings and goings, though I acknowledge that activity levels will vary throughout the day and at certain times of the week.
9. The change of use of the host building from one dwelling to 6 apartments would be likely to significantly increase the number of comings and goings and level of activity at the site, notwithstanding that the size of the host building

means that it could be occupied by a large family. Having regard to the location of the building close to a number of other dwellings in a residential area, I consider that the increase in noise and disturbance which would be generated by this increase in comings and goings would be materially harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties.

10. Although the proposed access, parking and bin storage/cycle parking areas are in the same position as existing access and parking facilities at the end of the rear garden, and though there is some screening between the site and the properties and gardens of its neighbours, the proposed increased intensity of residential use at the site and consequent use of the parking and ancillary areas would be likely to give rise to a harmful increase in noise and disturbance emanating from this part of the site. This would be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
11. Taking the above matters into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties having particular regard to noise and disturbance. It is therefore contrary to policies SP1, H1 and DM1 of the CS, Policy DC5 of The Manchester Plan – The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester adopted July 1995 (UDP), to relevant paragraphs of the Framework and to relevant guidance within the SPD. These policies and this guidance seek, amongst other things, development which positively contributes to the wellbeing of residents and to the character of the area and requires development to have regard to effects on amenity including noise. Although the Council's second reason for refusal also refers to CS Policy H6, this does not appear to be directly relevant to this issue.

Mix of housing

12. The appeal site comprises a large, 3 storey plus basement 5 bedroom semi-detached dwelling. It is located in a predominantly residential area, at the end of a road comprising properties of a similar scale. The immediate surrounding area is generally characterised by semi-detached properties, some similar in scale to the host building and others being smaller in scale.
13. The proposal to extend the host building and convert it into 6 apartments would result in the loss of the existing large dwelling. Two of the apartments would have 1 bedroom, three would have 2 bedrooms and one would have 3 bedrooms. Policy H6 of the CS relates specifically to South Manchester and states that outside the district centres priorities will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing. I am not aware of any definition used by the Council to define what constitutes family housing.
14. Though not referred to in the Council's first reason for refusal, the appellant has drawn my attention to Policy DC5.2 of the UDP which states that there will be a general presumption in favour of flat conversions within residential areas and that they will be particularly welcome where large, old, difficult to re-use properties are involved, and where proposed schemes provide investment enabling the retention and improvement of housing stock.
15. Although the Council states that there is a need for larger accommodation in the area, I have not been provided with any evidence to demonstrate that this is indeed the case and what is in fact meant by larger accommodation or evidence that there is not a need for the type of accommodation proposed.

The proposal would provide a mix of accommodation sizes, including a 3 bedroom apartment which could be suitable for use by families. As stated, the area appears to comprise mainly single dwellings, many of which are large, and the proposal would contribute to the mix and balance of housing provision in the locality. Therefore, in the absence of any evidence to justify the retention of the host building as a single dwelling, I do not consider that its loss would be harmful to housing provision in the area.

16. Taking the above matters into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the mix and balance of housing provision in the locality. It therefore accords with policies SP1, H1 and H6 of the CS which seek, amongst other things, to create neighbourhoods of choice and to provide high quality and diverse housing which meets identified shortfalls. Although the Council also referred to CS Policy DM1 in its first reason for refusal, this policy relates to development management and does not therefore appear to be directly related to the principle of the proposed change of use.

Other Matters

17. The proposal would add to the mix of housing in the area and would provide an additional 5 residential units in an accessible location. However, any modest social and economic benefits arising from the proposal would not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties that I have identified.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Beverley Wilders

INSPECTOR