
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2019

by D Child BA BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/19/3235717
54 Woodville Road, Altrincham WA14 2HD

- 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 John Atkins against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 97993/HHA/19, dated 10 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the removal of existing ground floor window and enlargement of opening to enable the insertion of new frame with a central door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the removal of existing ground floor window and enlargement of opening to enable the insertion of new frame with a central door, at 54 Woodville Road, Altrincham, WA14 2HD, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 97993/HHA/19, dated 10 June 2019, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with Proposed Plans 880_(PL)_101 Rev A.
 - 3) The frame and central door hereby permitted shall be constructed of timber and finished in a solid paint finish to match the existing windows.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council altered the description of the development of application Ref 97993/HHA/19, following the receipt of amended plans. This is correct, as the proposed plan 880_(PL)_101A Rev A describes a central door. I have therefore taken the description of development from the Council's decision notice and shall proceed to consider the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Devisdale Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. The host property is a substantial semi-detached property, faced in yellow brick, located on a corner plot to the western end of Woodville Road at the junction with St Margaret's Road.

5. The appeal site is located within the CA, which is a designated heritage asset. The main parties disagree over whether the building is a positive building, and which is the principal elevation. Nevertheless, I am satisfied the appeal dwelling makes a positive contribution to the CA. Irrespective of which is the principle elevation, the statutory duty set out in Section 72 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 the CA.
6. The significance of the CA lies, in part, in the manner in which it encompasses substantial residences of varied architectural styles, set back from the highway within spacious grounds, behind low stone walls with planting above. The scale of dwellings is reflective of the historic evolution and affluence of the suburb and gives the CA its strong and easily identifiable residential character.
7. The frame and jambs of the central door would closely match the verticality of the existing sash boxes and the alteration of the opening would only affect the low-level cill. While one original window would be removed, due to the design and small scale of the scheme, and the setback nature of the appeal dwelling behind planting, the proposal would not harm visual amenity in views from either street. A high boundary wall and hedge largely obscure views of the neighbouring corresponding ground floor window. As a result, the impact on the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings would be confined, limited, and subtle. There would be no cumulative impact, and I concur with the Council that the loss of the modern glass lightwell would not be significant.
8. To achieve the necessary headroom, the door frame would not align horizontally with the existing glazing bars. Because it would not fully reflect the division within the openings, the proposal would therefore technically conflict with the Supplementary Planning Document SPD 4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations. Nevertheless, within the context of such a substantial building, I am not persuaded that such minor differences to the opening would be unduly harmful. The proposal would not detract from the positive contribution the building makes to the CA.
9. I therefore find that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Devisdale Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with the design and heritage protection aims of Policies L7 and R1 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012 or be at odds with the SPD5.10 and SPD5.10a Devisdale Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. It would not conflict with the heritage protection and design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons the appeal should be allowed, and planning permission should be granted, subject to conditions necessary for the avoidance of doubt and proper planning, and that seek to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

D Child

INSPECTOR