

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2019

by Mr W Johnson BA(Hons) DipTP DipUDR MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/W/19/3236559

Land adjacent to Archer Cottage, Sefton Road, Middleton, Rochdale M24 4AB

- 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 Lee Neville against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00631/FUL, dated 3 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: 'Proposed new detached two storey dwelling. resubmission App No 18/01367/FUL'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. For clarity and precision, I have inserted 'Land adjacent to' in the address in the banner heading above, as it is listed on the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue of this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area, including the setting of Archer Cottage and Westdene, which are both non-designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an area of land measuring approximately 0.07ha in area, which once formed part of the garden area to Archer Cottage. Surrounding the site on the front, rear and side boundary on the opposite side to Archer Cottage are numerous mature trees. Due to the surrounding topography the site occupies a lower level to Sefton Road, which forms of a cul-de-sac.
5. The proposed development is to erect a detached 2-storey dwelling comprising a bedroom with en-suite, lounge, dining room / kitchen, hall, utility room, WC, porch and a garage at ground floor. At first floor there would be a further 3no. bedrooms, a bathroom, study, store and a rear balcony. The proposed dwelling would be modern in design with brickwork, render and cladding proposed as external materials with a tiled roof.
6. Sefton Road is an attractive street, with a variety of dwelling types, including semi-detached houses, detached houses and bungalows ranging in age and design. Whilst semi-detached houses are located close to the site, these are

situated on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site in the direction of Archer Park. Whereas, the properties on the same side of the road as the site are detached in larger plots. Additionally, towards the end of the road in the vicinity of the site, there is a notable increase in the presence of mature trees, resulting in a verdant character.

7. The plot size of the appeal scheme in this location appears similar in size to the remaining plot at Archer Cottage. Additionally, I note that the Council raises no objections to the principle of developing the site for residential purposes. Under these circumstances and in the absence of any substantive information to the contrary, I have no reason to conclude otherwise. I note that the majority of properties neighbouring the appeal site are situated in more generous plots, with larger gardens, which gives a distinct sense of spaciousness and ordered pattern of development to the immediate surroundings.
8. The generous plot sizes contribute to a regular rhythm of development, making a positive contribution to the surrounding area. In the context of the area surrounding the appeal site, the appeal scheme through its footprint, and overall bulk and massing would be excessive for the site and distinctly at odds with the character of neighbouring properties, as it would appear discordant in its location and more cramped in its appearance.
9. Thus, the size of the dwelling proposed as a separate planning unit, would be at odds with the existing properties in the immediate vicinity. The contrast between the scheme and the neighbouring dwellings would be exacerbated as the scheme would be sited close to Archer Cottage, which is much more modest in its proportions than the proposed development. This close relationship would accentuate the scale of the scheme and the plot that it would occupy, in comparison to surrounding properties. Additionally, the resultant significant adverse effect would be readily visible from the street.
10. It is common ground between the main parties that both Archer Cottage and Westdene are non-designated heritage assets. This concurs with my view, as the age and architectural merit of the buildings are a good example of buildings of the 'Arts and Crafts' era and they have prominence in the street. Additionally, in the case of Westdene, I note the historical significance of it being designed by Architect Edgar Wood.
11. Paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and the desirability of development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 197 of the Framework says the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should also be taken into account, requiring a balanced judgement to be made having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
12. Concerns have been raised by the Council regarding the fenestration details and lack of reference to local vernacular. In this regard, I note that the scheme proposes to use brick, render and cladding on the external surfaces of the building, with tiles on the roof. Whilst these materials are found on other properties in proximity to the site, it is not clear from the submitted drawings on how they would be applied to the building. However, I find that a suitably

worded condition could control how the proposed materials would be used in construction.

13. Additionally, I find that a well considered and modern approach to the fenestration details on the house has been designed, especially on the proposed front elevation, which would create a decorative feature, especially around the front entrance. Whilst representing a modern design, I find similar fenestration details on Sefton Road including the front entrance of Archer Cottage. Furthermore, I note that dormer styled windows are proposed in the roof, along with front facing gables, where examples also exist on neighbouring properties in the street.
14. However, whilst I find that the proposal includes materials and features present in the local vernacular, this does not outweigh the significant harm that I find that would result from the irregular and excessive footprint of the dwelling and the strident roof that would be formed as a consequence. Furthermore, I acknowledge the alterations that have occurred on the scheme before me, when compared to the previous application¹. Although the site is sustainably located, I still find that the proposed development would be excessive in scale and would be of a design that would fail to complement the existing street scene, which I consider to outweigh the overall location of the site.
15. For the above reasons the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area and would adversely affect the significance of the non-designated heritage assets of Archer Cottage and Westdene. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would conflict with the heritage, design, character and appearance aims of Policies DM1, P2, P3 and C3 of the Council's Core Strategy 2016 and the Framework.

Other Matters

16. Whilst also contributing to the Council's supply of housing, the proposed development would bring some social and economic benefits through the creation of an additional dwelling and during the construction phase of the development. However, these are relatively minor factors in favour of the development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

17. Taking all relevant matters into account, the appeal should be dismissed.

W Johnson

INSPECTOR

¹ 18/01367/FUL