
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2020 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by V Lucas LLB (Hons) MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/19/3239870
50 Heaton Road, Manchester, M20 4GW

- 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 Mrs Sequoia Chapman against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 123714/FH/2019, dated 23 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a 'Two storey side and rear extension. Solar panels to new roof section and existing roof.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No 50 Heaton Road and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling of similar appearance to other properties in the locality. The character of the area is derived in part from the uniformity in the form and massing of the semi-detached dwellings, which are built to a similar design, and from the space between them which creates a rhythm in the street scene. This proposal seeks permission to demolish the existing detached garage and erect a two-storey side extension.
5. Saved policy DC1 of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, July 1995 (the UDP) requires extensions to residential properties to have regard to the general character of the property and notes that proposals should not be excessively large or bulky.
6. The proposed development would significantly extend the host dwelling to the side over two storeys. Although the ridge line of the extension would be lower than the host dwelling, the ground and first floor of the front elevation would

- be flush with an extremely limited set-back from the main elevation of the host dwelling. Furthermore, whilst the design of the extension is intended to complement the appearance of the host dwelling through the inclusion of a double height bay window, due to its curved projection and height this design feature detracts further from the already limited set-back.
7. The appeal dwelling, along with its neighbour at No 52, reflects the established character of the area and pattern of development as good side spacing is retained between the properties. It is noted that No 52 has a garage to the side which somewhat reduces the gap between the properties, however due to its single storey nature there remains a generous gap at first floor level thus contributing towards the open character of the area. The proposed two-storey side extension would be a large and prominent addition, extending to within close proximity of the side boundary with No 52, thus significantly reducing the space between the pair of properties.
 8. Policy DC1.4 of the UDP recommends a minimum gap of 1.52m between side elevations and the common boundary, but if this cannot be achieved points a and c are given weight. These policy requirements allow for consideration of potential or future development and seek to ensure proposals remain sympathetic to the street scene.
 9. Whilst the neighbouring occupier at No 52 has not raised any objection to the proposal and have confirmed they do not intend to extend their existing garage to first floor level, there is no guarantee that this would not occur in the future. Additionally, due to the positioning of the proposed extension and relationship with No 52, it is evident that the gap cannot be shared equally between the two properties. As such, the proposed development has the potential to create a very narrow gap and therefore a terracing effect, which would erode the established character of the wider street scene.
 10. Photographs have been submitted of other two-storey side extensions within the area which either have a limited or no set-back, and which do not appear to be set-off the party boundary by the minimum required in policy DC1. However, I do not have any further details of these cases and cannot therefore be sure that the exact circumstances, the context or policies against which they were approved are the same as the proposal before me. Moreover, it seems to me that they do not reflect the prevailing character of the area.
 11. The appellant has however provided further details of approved extensions with limited or no set-back and lack of set-off from the side boundary. In some instances¹, images of floor plans have been provided which indicate the first floor would be set-back from the main front elevation, therefore ensuring these examples would read as a subservient and modern addition. In the case of 7 Endsleigh Road, it is acknowledged that the extension has a flush ground and first floor elevation. There is limited detail before me to determine the size of the set-back. Further, there is doubt as to whether this example has been built in accordance with approved plans. In all the above examples, I have not been provided with exact details on the relationship between neighbouring properties and cannot therefore determine whether they are directly comparable to the appeal proposal.

¹ 27 Kinburn Road and 75 Mellington Avenue

12. It is acknowledged that in the case of 21 Broughville Drive, the extension would not include a set-back or reduced ridge or eaves height. However, this is not necessarily a good example of development to follow as it does not appear to relate well to the host property. Furthermore, I do not have the full details which led to its approval, therefore this example does not justify the appeal proposal.
13. Moreover, notwithstanding all the examples which have been referenced, this appeal has been determined on its own merits in light of the current policy and guidance and the proposed extension due to its scale, massing and positioning would result in a highly prominent and incongruous addition to the property and wider street scene.
14. Reference has also been made to other developments within the local area, particularly a ten-storey building and multi-storey carpark. I do not have the full details before me however, based on the information provided, it appears that these examples are large-scale developments relating to the hospital. As such, they are read in a different context to the appeal site and are not therefore directly relatable to the appeal proposal.
15. Consequently, taking all the above into consideration, the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of No 50 Heaton Road and the wider area. It is therefore contrary to policies DC1 of the UDP and SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, July 2012, which collectively seek to ensure, amongst other things, that developments have regard to the character of the property and the surrounding area.

Other Matters

16. The Council have not raised any issues on other matters including living conditions, waste storage, highways and nature conservation. Nevertheless, the appellant has sought to demonstrate compliance with other development plan policies. Based on all I have seen and read I have no reason to find that this proposal raises additional issues to those listed in the main issue above. However, this is a neutral matter rather than one which carries weight in favour of the proposal.
17. I have considered the letters of support for the proposal and acknowledge that it includes measures to improve energy efficiency and climate change. However, the limited scale of the development limits the weight I can afford to the matter as a benefit of the proposal.
18. My attention has been drawn to policy H6 however I have not been provided with a copy. Based on the limited information before me, this policy appears to relate to new housing developments rather than proposals for residential extensions. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged the proposed extension is required to provide additional living space for a growing family, thus helping to retain a family within the area. This matter is addressed further in letters of support for the proposal.
19. As such, the proposed development will result in some public benefits. However, taken individually and cumulatively, those benefits do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area that I have identified above, which carries considerable weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hannah Ellison

Appeals Planning Officer

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

V Lucas

INSPECTOR