
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2020 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G4240/D/20/3244231

40 Woodbridge Avenue, Audenshaw, Manchester M34 5LL

- 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 Mark Whitworth against the decision of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00843/FUL, dated 30 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension comprising car port at ground floor level plus bedroom, en-suite and dressing room at first floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

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 proposed development on the character and appearance of the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling occupying a corner site on Woodbridge Avenue with Belvor Avenue. The immediate area is predominantly characterised by semi-detached properties of similar appearance to the host dwelling. This proposal seeks permission to erect a two-storey side extension.
5. Tameside Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (March 2010) (the SPD) provides guidance for household extensions and in particular policy RED5 sets out principles for the design of side extensions and notes that extensions to dwellings on corner plots must not detract from the street scene or break a well-defined building line. The properties to the rear of the appeal site, along the north side of Belvor Avenue, follow a strong building line. Whilst many have front porches, they are of a small scale and do not detract from the well-defined layout. The original side elevation of the host dwelling respects this line.

6. It is acknowledged that the host dwelling has an existing single storey side extension which projects beyond the established building line along Belvor Avenue. However, its limited scale and massing ensures it is not overly dominant in the street scene. The proposed development would significantly extend the host dwelling over two storeys and it would project up to the side boundary of the appeal site. It would be positioned immediately opposite the two-storey gable wall of No 38 Woodbridge Avenue on the opposite corner of the junction, therefore enclosing this part of the street. As such, due to its overall scale, massing and positioning beyond a prominent elevation, this proposal would be a visually intrusive and overbearing addition in the street scene and would detract from the well-established layout of the immediate area.
7. Furthermore, the proposal introduces substantial massing to the side of the host property, resulting in a significant visual unbalance to this pair of semi-detached dwellings which would be readily apparent from public vantage points. Therefore, it would disrupt the visual symmetry with No 42 Woodbridge Avenue, which is characteristic of pairs of semi-detached properties in the locality.
8. The appellant suggests that there are other examples of side extensions within the area, however I have not been provided with further details. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the proposed development would be similar to the existing two-storey side extension to No 38 Woodbridge Avenue. I do not have the full details of that development and cannot therefore be certain that the circumstances which led to its approval are directly comparable to this appeal. However, I observed that it is of a substantial scale and massing and has an overbearing effect on the street scene, particularly when viewed from the side. It seems to me that this is not necessarily a good example of development to follow, and as noted, the appeal proposal would further enclose this part of the street. As such, this example does not justify the appeal proposal.
9. Consequently, taking all the above into consideration, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the wider area. It is therefore contrary to policy H10 of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (November 2004) which seeks to ensure developments complement or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would also conflict with the requirements of the SPD as set out above.

Other Matters

10. Concern has been raised regarding the Council's processing of the planning application. However, this has no bearing on the main issue and the recommendation is based on the planning merits of the case.
11. It is noted neighbouring occupiers have not objected to the proposal and the Council has not raised concerns regarding the effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. However, a lack of opposition for a proposal is not a ground for granting planning permission and a lack of harm to living conditions is a neutral matter rather than one which carries weight in favour of the proposal.

12. I acknowledge that the appellant is willing to make amendments to the proposal although there are no specific details before me. Nevertheless, I can only determine the appeal on the basis of the plans which have been considered by the Council and on which neighbouring occupiers were consulted.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Hannah Ellison

Appeal Planning Officer

Inspector's Decision

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

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR