
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2020

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/20/3253523

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 Omar Yaseen against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 126045/FO/2020, dated 21 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing property into 4 self-contained apartments with rear extension/alterations, parking and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on 1) the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to noise and disturbance, and 2) the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The appeal site is located within a predominantly residential area. Although it is close to commercial properties on Wilbraham Road and the Metrolink line, the site is not subject to any significant noise from these sources. On my site visit, on a weekday afternoon, I observed that the area was relatively quiet, save for passing traffic and the comings and goings of residents and their vehicles.
4. The proposed development to convert the existing semi-detached property to four self-contained apartments includes the provision of a parking area comprising four spaces to the rear of the property. This parking area would be accessed using the existing vehicular access point from Buckingham Road.
5. Although the proposal would result in an inevitable increase in vehicle movements and comings and goings associated with the proposed use, I consider that in the context of the surrounding area where there is noise from passing traffic, vehicle manoeuvres and general domestic activity, such noise would not cause significant adverse impacts.
6. The parking area would be separated from the rear gardens of 30 Salisbury Road and 31 Westfield Road by a proposed garden area and existing boundary treatments. There are also some landscape features in the rear gardens

between the properties that would contribute to serve as a buffer and additional landscaping and boundary treatments could be secured by condition were the appeal to be allowed. For these reasons, I consider that given this separation distance and the level of noise that would be generated by the proposal, there would not be significant adverse impacts.

7. The rear garden of 33 Westfield Road would share a boundary with the parking area, however this is similar to the current arrangement and due to the corner siting of this property, it would already experience noise from vehicles and activity associated with Buckingham Road and Westfield Road. Given this context, due to the amount of development proposed, any noise from the proposed use would not cause significant adverse impacts.
8. I am mindful that due to the size of the property, it would easily allow for occupation by a large family that would also involve an obvious amount of vehicle movements and comings and goings. I am also mindful that the access to which the parking area is proposed, is existing and any future residential use of the property would likely result in this access being used by vehicles. I have also not been provided with substantive evidence to demonstrate that the proposed use would generate noise and disturbance that would have significant adverse impacts.
9. I note that in a recent appeal¹ at the site, the Inspector considered that the conversion of the property to form six apartments would have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties having particular regard to noise and disturbance. Whilst I acknowledge the previous decision, the proposal before me is for a smaller number of apartments. I am also presented with acoustic evidence that it would appear did not form part of the previous appeal. In any event, I am not bound by the findings of the previous appeal and have determined this appeal on its own individual merits and the evidence before me.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to noise and disturbance. It would comply with Policies SP1, H1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) and Saved Policies DC5 and DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995). Collectively, these policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development does not harm the wellbeing of residents with regard to noise.
11. The proposal would also comply with guidance contained in the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (2007) which seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development contributes to the creation of high-quality areas with regard to amenity.
12. The proposal would comply with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework) which requires, amongst other things, that decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions, and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.

¹ APP/B4215/W/19/3233690

Character and appearance

13. The appeal property is a substantial semi-detached dwelling located in a prominent corner position at the junction of Salisbury Road and Buckingham Road. It is a grand property, incorporating traditional architectural features such as double height bay windows and pitched roof detailing that positively adds to its character and appearance. Its appearance is reflected in the adjoining property which when combined display a pleasing degree of symmetry that is a positive feature of the street-scene, which is largely made up of properties of a similar scale, many of which have been extended and altered.
14. The appeal property incorporates an existing side projection which although clearly visible in the street-scene, is subordinate to the dominant three-storey pitched roof, double height bay, feature of the front elevation. There is also an existing small single storey rear projection.
15. The proposal would involve the increase in height of the side projection, and also includes a single storey rear extension that spans almost the full width of the rear elevation, and a first-floor rear extension that would be approximately half the width of the rear elevation.
16. The side projection that is currently formed of a double height bay window with pitched roof would be increased to the same height as the main roof of the property. It would not appear subordinate to the host building and due to its scale and massing, and the prominent siting of the appeal property, it would harmfully detract from the main bay windows and gable feature of the front elevation and dominate the property.
17. The proposed rear extension, due to its design, materials and fenestration does not relate well to the traditional features of the host property. When combined with the proposed increase in height of the side projection, it would create a cluttered and haphazard appearance of varying depths, materials, roof styles and fenestration that would cause harm to the overall appearance of the property.
18. Whilst a condition could be imposed to require the use of brick to match the host building, I consider that this alone would not overcome the harm I have identified.
19. Although many of the properties in the surrounding area have been extended and altered, I do not have full details of the background to these alterations, some of which serve to demonstrate the harm that can be caused by unsympathetic alterations. Given the prominence of the appeal property in the street-scene and the specific nature of the appeal proposal, I find that none of those in the surrounding area are directly comparable. I have in any event determined the appeal on its own merits.
20. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012). Collectively, these policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that developments create well designed places that enhance or create character, protect and enhance the built environment and be of appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.

21. The proposal would also be contrary to guidance contained in the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (2007) which seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development contributes to the creation of high-quality areas with regard to design.
22. The proposal would be contrary to paragraphs 127 and 130 of the Framework which require, amongst other things, that planning decisions should ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture; and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Other Matters

23. The Council consider that the proposal would compromise successful regeneration. Whilst I have found that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, I do not find that this harm, which would be relatively localised, would compromise successful regeneration.
24. The proposal would contribute towards the City's housing targets and generate increased revenues in council tax for the Council. It would also bring a property that is apparently vacant and in need of repair back into use. I am not however provided with any substantive evidence that this is the only viable proposal to achieve these aims and I find that overall, these are minor benefits to which I give little weight, that do not override the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

25. Although I have found no harm in respect of living conditions, this does not overcome the harm I have found to the character and appearance of the area.
26. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR