

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 7 December 2020 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/20/3260906

68 Vale Road, Timperley, ALTRINCHAM, WA15 7TG

- 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 & Mrs W Weilding against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 101266/HHA/20, dated 1 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolish existing store and erection of ground & first floor side extension to dwelling.
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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 main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 68 Vale Road and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. 68 Vale Road is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located in a residential area. The proposal is to demolish a single storey store and erect a two-storey side extension.
5. The character and appearance of the area is defined by similar semi-detached properties with hipped roofs and symmetrical designs. The pairs of houses are set out in a regular pattern which provides a rhythm to the street scene.
6. The detailed guidance within the Trafford Council Supplementary Planning Document, SPD4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations, 2012 (SPD) recognises that spaces between buildings are important characteristics and that a gap of a minimum of 1.0 metre should be retained between the side elevation of an extended property and its side boundary, to retain the impression of space to the side of the dwelling. It also states that extensions should appear subordinate and be stepped back from the existing front elevation as well as down from the main roofline.

7. The existing store has a simple form with a flat roof, and as it is single storey it reads as a subservient addition to the property. The proposed two-storey extension without any set down or set back, would significantly increase the bulk and massing of host property particularly at first floor and roof level. Moreover, the extension would be sited in very close proximity to the side boundary of the site.
8. I note that the existing single storey extension is less than 1 metre from the side boundary and that it would be impractical to construct an extension to meet the 1 metre requirement. However, from the site visit I noted that the neighbouring property has previously been extended to the boundary with a two-storey extension and an alteration to the roof from hipped to gable, which reduces the gap between the buildings. Whilst I do not have any details of the extension before me, it appears to have been in situ for a considerable time.
9. Whilst the appeal proposal would provide a gap between the ground floor properties which currently does not exist, it would further reduce the gap between the neighbouring properties at first floor level, which has a positive impact on the site and the surrounding area, resulting in a cramped appearance. Consequently, it would further erode the spatial characteristics and rhythm of the streetscene.
10. I note that the appellant would be willing to set back the extension from the front elevation. However, I do not however have plans of any set back and have therefore determined the appeal with reference to the submitted plans.
11. My attention has been drawn to several examples of similar extensions in the area, which I saw on my site visit. I noted that each of them was adjacent to single storey extensions at the neighbouring properties, thus a reasonable gap between the buildings at first floor level at least, was retained. Whilst I do not have the full details and circumstances leading to their approval, I have determined this appeal on its own merits based on the site-specific circumstances of the case.
12. Consequently, taking all the above into consideration, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider street scene. It would therefore conflict with policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012) which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure developments are appropriate in their context and enhance the street scene or character of the area by appropriately addressing scale, density, height, massing and elevation treatment. It would also be contrary to the requirements of the SPD as set out above.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would provide a number of benefits which I have considered.
14. The appearance of the existing store is similar to that of garages in the vicinity and its presence does not detract from the streetscene and, as outlined above, the important gap between the dwellings is retained at first floor level. I am unconvinced therefore that its demolition, and replacement with a two-storey extension, would be of significant benefit to the character and appearance of the area.

15. The resulting external access to the rear of the host property would have the benefit of allowing storage of wheelie bins away from the front of the property allowing an improvement to the street scene and allow garden refuse to be removed. In addition, the installation of a ground floor wc and an increase in the size of the bedroom would provide more accessible and useable space for existing and future occupiers, although there is nothing before me to indicate that the building does not function well as a house presently.
16. These benefits carry limited weight in favour of the proposal. However, when taken as a whole, they do not outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area which carries significant weight. Accordingly, the benefits of the proposal set out do not indicate that permission should be granted.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. 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