



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 February 2021

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/20/3263705

39 Cecil Avenue, Sale, M33 5BG

- 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 Stephen Graham against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 100937/HHA/20, dated 4 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of a double garage to the front of the property and a single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice, which describes the proposal in a more concise manner than the version used on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located in a residential area, opposite a secondary school. Properties in the surrounding area are generally detached houses and bungalows, which are set back from the road behind front gardens. There is considerable variety in the design and type of buildings along the street, which provides visual interest. Street trees, hedges and vegetation in gardens give a green and pleasant feel to the area.
5. Number 39 Cecil Avenue (No. 39), is an attractive, white rendered house with twin gables, one of which projects slightly forward of the main part of the house. The proposed garage would extend out from the front gable, but would have a greater width and a shallower roof pitch, so would fail to reflect the proportions of this distinctive feature of the house. By obscuring a large section of the existing front elevation, the extension would detract significantly from the design of the existing house, despite the use of matching materials.
6. The houses and bungalows along this section of Cecil Avenue have a fairly consistent front building line, but the proposed garage would project forward almost as far as the front boundary wall. I acknowledge that the proposed garage would provide secure parking for vehicles currently parked on the drive,

- but the extension would be clearly visible from the street, and by breaching the rhythm of the existing building line to such an extent, it would fail to respect the character of the area.
7. Front gardens form an important aspect of the character of the area, but the proposed garage would occupy a significant proportion of the garden space at No. 39, with limited space remaining in front for any planting to soften or screen it. This loss of part of the garden would cause harm to the character of the area, which would be further exacerbated by the creation of a large, blank wall close to the front boundary, for a substantial proportion of the plot width. This would appear as an overly prominent feature which would appear incongruous and out of character in the street.
 8. I acknowledge that there are other houses nearby with front projecting garages, including several properties on Sherbrook Close, but that street is a modern cul-de-sac, which has a very different character to Cecil Avenue. Furthermore, the appeal property is not viewed in the same context as those houses, despite their close proximity. The nearby examples do not, therefore, justify the proposed development, which would cause harm to the character of the host dwelling and the wider area.
 9. The large educational building opposite the appeal site was designed for a very different function and cannot easily be compared with a domestic property. However, whilst the sixth form building is more recent addition with a different architectural style from the original school, it has retained the front building line. This is an important element of the character of the street, which the appeal proposal would fail to reflect.
 10. I note the appellants comment that a free standing garage could be erected without the need for planning permission, but there is no permitted development right for an outbuilding to be constructed on land in front of the main part of a house. Such a fall back position does not, therefore, exist and I have given it no weight in this decision.
 11. The proposed porch extension at the side of the house would be a modest feature which would continue the existing covered passageway. This element of the scheme would be visually acceptable in relation to the existing house and the streetscene.
 12. The covered side extension would be acceptable, but I have found that the front garage extension would cause harm to the character and appear of the area. This element of the scheme would conflict with Policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan 2012, which requires that new development must be appropriate in its context and enhance the street scene or character of the area. It would also conflict with the detailed guidance on front extensions and porches contained in the Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2012.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR