



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 June 2021

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/21/3272086

1 Elmwood, Sale M33 5RN

- 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 Andrew Nicholson against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 101605/HHA/20, dated 13 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is a double storey extension side of house to boundary (Access to rear of house still available via passageway and/or side is adjacent to Fir Tree Avenue so full access available to rear of property); a single storey extension to front of house stepped back from line of existing garage; the internal will provide: larger kitchen/living area and a dining room downstairs plus larger bedrooms plus en suite to master upstairs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. This differs from the description appearing on the Council's Decision Notice which describes the development as 'Erection of a part single/part two storey side extension, single storey front extension and external alterations. This does not change the development proposed, however, it provides a more succinct and accurate description.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The site accommodates a two-storey end-terraced unit with a lean-to store at the side. An attached garage paired with the adjoining neighbour projects to the front. The remainder of the frontage is an open hardstanding providing additional parking space. The site has a private garden area to the rear bordered by timber fencing and backs on to a public walkway. The corner plot lies at the junction of Elmwood with Firtree Avenue. The latter is an estate loop road serving a number of cul-de-sac offshoots.
5. The area is characterised by modern two storey housing including detached, semis and terraced properties set behind predominantly open fronted gardens. The estate has a number of different house designs but has a high degree of

- uniformity in the scale of development and the limited palette of external materials.
6. The scheme proposes the widening of the dwelling through additions to the existing gable end siding on to Firtree Avenue. At first floor this would be at the full depth of the gable and follow the existing ridge and eaves lines. A wider ground floor enlargement would extend close to the fence line on the loop road and forward of the front elevation to connect with the projecting garage.
 7. The majority of houses addressing the curving line of the Firtree Avenue estate road face on to it with their ridgelines lying parallel to it. However, some corner properties lie with their gable ends facing the road and others lie slightly skewed. Where buildings side on to the estate road provision has generally been made to provide a sense of spaciousness about the junction areas by retaining a gap between the buildings and the side boundaries. This reflects the approach in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – A Guide for Designing House Extensions & Alterations [2012] which advises that extensions to corner properties should generally maintain a minimum gap of 2m to the side boundary.
 8. Elmwood connects to the loop road close to the centre of the main curve. The terrace is prominent on the approaches due to its unbroken mass but also its unusually close siting to the back of the pavement on Firtree Avenue. Although there is no rigid building line on this part of the avenue, properties are set back from the pavement line behind gardens. The sideways projection of the extensions, albeit modest in width, would bring the lower element to within 0.1m of the side boundary, according to the Council's report.
 9. In combination with the upper floor extension and the various angles to the roof edge, this would heighten the prominence of the building. This would be to the extent that it would be excessively prominent and unduly impose on the Firtree Avenue streetscene. The effect would not be assisted by the fact that the front garden areas to the units opposite the gable are relatively short in comparison to others on the loop. This would heighten the greater sense of encroachment into the spaciousness of the street scene at this point on the road. Although the ground floor roofline would offer some visual relief to the scale of the extensions by breaking up the mass of the gable, this would not be sufficient to offset the visual imposition on the avenue.
 10. In support of the scheme, the appellant has directed me to a number of two storey side extensions that have been permitted on other corner plots within the estate. The majority of these relate to semi-detached properties and are located where they lie skewed to Firtree Avenue and where they appear to have greater separation to development on the opposite side of the loop road.
 11. I also acknowledge that the opposite end of the terrace backs directly on to the pavement of a narrow cul-de-sac entrance between two terraces. However, this 'gateway' arrangement to the enclave of development behind the terraces differs from the circumstance of the proposal where the extension would be prominent on the main access road serving the estate.
 12. Nevertheless, the existence of development elsewhere does not represent an appropriate reason to find in favour of a proposal that would cause harm. Precedent is rarely an argument that should carry great weight in planning decisions which should be made on their own merits in the context of the

development plan and other material considerations. These examples do not lead me to alter my findings on this issue.

13. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal would conflict with Policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy [2012] and the SPD as they require development to enhance street scenes and improve the character of areas through appropriate design.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has referred me to an alternative scheme suggested by the Council for the purposes of comparison. However, this is theoretical only and is therefore a matter of negligible weight. It does not provide suitable justification for the appeal proposal, a case I have considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

15. The development would be contrary to the adopted development plan and there are no material considerations indicating a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. For those reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR