
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2021

by S Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 5 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/21/3269498

20 St Hilda's Road, Manchester M22 4FP

- 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 Scott Ogilvie against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 127148/FO/2020, dated 11 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "demolish existing garage and build new bungalow dwelling at the bottom of 20 Hildas land".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are:
 1. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area,
 2. Whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for occupiers of the proposed dwelling, with particular regard to the provision of private garden space.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. 20, St Hilda's Road is a detached house located within a well-established residential area. Properties in the area, which appear to have been constructed at around the same time and to a similar design, are generally semi-detached, two-storey houses, interspersed with detached houses including No 20 and its immediate neighbour. Dwellings are constructed in brick with double height bay windows and projecting gables and hipped roofs. In the main, the buildings are set back from the road on consistent building lines behind small front gardens and driveways. These details, the regular appearance, detailing and rhythm of the properties, contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The rear of No 20 backs onto Haughton Drive, a cul-de-sac comprising residential properties of a similar style. However, the appearance of this side of the street, where gardens back onto it, is characterised by timber fences and brick boundary walls behind which are a number of small-scale domestic

outbuildings, including the garage at No 20. That garage is set at a right angle to the street.

5. The proposed bungalow, which would replace the garage, would be constructed in brick with a tiled roof in materials to match other properties in the area. Whilst it would be of single storey, like the other outbuildings in the area, it would have a much greater footprint and massing than the other outbuildings and would be considerably taller. Accordingly, it would be more dominant in the street scene than the existing structures.
6. Moreover, the proposed bungalow, which would present a gabled frontage to the road, would not respect the scale, form or massing of the other residential properties. In addition, it would not respect the regular building lines of the other dwellings in the locality and would be set back only a limited distance from the highway. As such it would be out of character with, and thereby detrimental to, the prevailing character and appearance of the street scene.
7. At my site visit I noticed that a nearby corner property has a conservatory extension which is sited forward of the building line. However, this is a visually lightweight structure with a low roof and is not visually intrusive. It is not therefore comparable with the proposed development and its presence does not persuade me that the bungalow would be appropriate.
8. Accordingly, in this respect, the proposal would be contrary to Policies SP 1 and DM 1 of the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 which require, amongst other things, that development should be of an appropriate form and massing and should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

9. The proposed dwelling would have a larger footprint than the garage it would replace and would therefore occupy a larger proportion of the present garden. There is no suggestion that the remaining area of garden for use by occupiers of No 20 would be inadequate but the Council is concerned that the proposed amenity space for residents of the proposed bungalow would be insufficient.
10. Proposed amenity space would comprise a driveway to one side, for the parking of vehicles, and a narrow strip of land to the rear which would be hard surfaced. In addition to that, plans indicate provision of a small triangular shaped area of grassed land.
11. It seems to me that the area of outdoor space available to residents as private garden space would be limited in terms of its size. Moreover, given its very limited depth from the rear of the property, and its enclosure with a 6ft fence, the space would be oppressive and uninviting. The triangular area, whilst increasing the total amount of space available, would be contrived in terms of its configuration and would add little practical value to occupants. As such the proposal would not serve day to day needs for outdoor space of the occupants of the dwelling.
12. Consequently, the proposal would not provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers of the property in terms of the provision of outdoor space. In that respect the proposal would be contrary to Policy DM 1 of the Core Strategy which requires development to have adequate external amenity space.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that the proposed building would not cause undue overlooking or loss of light to neighbouring properties. I also acknowledge that parking provision would be made within the site such that the proposal would not add to parking demand in the area. However, these are neutral matters and do not weigh in favour of the scheme.
14. I note that the application may have been supported by some Council officers. However, I can only consider the appeal on the basis of the evidence before me.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. The proposal would provide a unit of residential accommodation in a sustainable location to add to the housing land supply. However, the benefit of one additional unit is limited and as such this matter carries limited weight. Accordingly, it does not outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of future occupiers.
16. The proposal is contrary to the development plan considered as a whole and there are no circumstances before me which indicate that the appeal should succeed. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, and taking all other matters raised into account, the appeal is dismissed.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR