



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 June 2021 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/21/3273093

The Coach House, 58 Central Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 4ZA

- 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 Ryan Lewis against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 128221/FH/2020, dated 5 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor extension to include roof terrace.
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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.

Procedural Matter

3. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration in my decision-making, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Preliminary Matter

4. The description of development above is taken from the application form. However, a more precise description is that provided in the Council's decision notice and the appeal form as 'Erection of a part single part two storey side extension to include roof terrace to form additional living accommodation'. I have considered the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area; and on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at 58 Central Road, with particular regard to outlook and light.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

6. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwelling of simple linear form and in the style of a coach house. It is located at the head of a cul-de-sac in a residential area surrounded by larger buildings. While the road frontage is characterised by more traditional architecture, there is some variety in the character and form of the buildings in the immediate locality of the appeal site.
7. The proposed extension would have a considerable footprint and would therefore fill much of the space to the side of the host dwelling. The remaining space around the resultant property would be extremely limited and narrow, and thus would fail to off-set the extension's significant massing. The proposal would therefore appear as an overly dominant feature rather than as a subservient addition to the existing dwelling.
8. The front elevation of the proposal appears to be along the same line as the existing fence. If the fence were to be removed, the proposed front elevation of the extension would be prominently visible. The height of the extension, orientation of the cladding and the presence of the glazed screen above would mean that the front elevation would look markedly different to a boundary fence. The use and extent of timber cladding would contrast sharply with the traditional brick form of the coach house, and the limited window openings and lack of other detailing along that elevation would provide no relief. As such, this part of the extension would appear as an obtrusive and incongruous feature which would not respect the modest scale and character of the existing property.
9. If the existing fence were to remain, it is of a significant height and this and No 58 would screen much of the ground floor element of the proposal from view from Central Road. However, the overall scale, massing and design would still be readily apparent from the cul-de-sac and from neighbouring properties above the fence. As such, retention of the fence would not overcome the harm identified.
10. The first-floor element of the proposal would be more visible from the wider public realm than the ground floor. However, due to its set-down ridge, limited projection and overall design, I consider that it would be a subservient addition to the host property. It would have a modern appearance, with glazing, cladding and aluminium fenestration, however due to its modest scale this would not detract from the otherwise traditional form of the existing dwelling or the wider area. Nevertheless, this would not reduce the harm resulting from the ground floor element.
11. Taking all the above into consideration, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. It would therefore conflict with Policy DC1 of The Manchester Plan, The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (July 1995) (the UDP) and Policies SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, Development Plan Document (July 2012) (the CS). These collectively seek to achieve well-designed places and ensure that developments are of appropriate scale, form and massing and have regard to the character of the property and the wider area. Furthermore, it would conflict with the requirement of the Framework to achieve good design.

Living conditions

12. Whilst the proposed development would be of a significant scale and massing at ground-floor, it would be positioned at a similar distance from the facing windows of No 58 as the existing boundary fence and would not be significantly higher than that fence. When viewed from the rear ground floor windows of No 58, whilst the proposal would be visible, the primary outlook would remain of the parking area between the two properties. Due to the restricted massing of the proposed first-floor extension, the outlook from the upper floor windows and balcony of No 58 would remain similar to the existing relationship. As such, the proposal would not be overbearing or result in an uncomfortable increase in the existing sense of enclosure for neighbouring occupiers.
13. Due to its scale and siting, the proposal would only restrict sunlight to the ground floor windows and parking area of No 58 for a short period of the day compared to the existing situation. The parking area is not particularly sensitive to levels of sunlight as it does not appear to function as private garden space for No 58. Consequently, the degree of overshadowing of No 58 would not be significantly different to that which is currently created by the existing dwelling. Therefore, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of light to the occupiers of the neighbouring property.
14. Accordingly, the proposed development would not significantly adversely affect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in terms of outlook and light, and thus would not conflict with UDP Policy DC1 or CS Policies SP1 and DM1 insofar as they require that developments have regard to the effect upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and do not create an undue loss of sunlight or daylight. Nor would it conflict with the Framework requirement to achieve a high standard of amenity.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has indicated that a single storey side extension could be erected under permitted development rights and would reduce the amount of outside space compared to the proposal. However, I have been provided with only very limited detail of what such an extension would look like, and as such cannot be certain that it would be comparable to the appeal proposal in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the appellant notes that the fallback would not provide sufficient internal space and as such, I do not consider that there is a realistic possibility that it would be erected if the appeal were dismissed. I therefore give this very limited weight.
16. The proposal would provide additional living accommodation, including space for homeworking, allowing the appellant to meet their changing household needs. However, this would be a private benefit to the appellant and whilst the host dwelling may be compact, there is no convincing evidence before me to indicate that it could not provide an adequate standard of accommodation for a family as it currently exists. I appreciate that it may not suit the appellant's particular needs at this time and that there is policy support for extending rather than moving house, however the policy also requires regard to be had to the character of the property and the area, which for the reasons set out above, would be harmed by the proposal. Moreover, it has not been demonstrated that the harm identified above is necessary to achieve the additional living and home office space desired.

17. The development plan also supports retention of family housing, however the host property is already a small family dwelling and there is no substantive evidence before me of a particular need for 3-bedroom dwellings of the size proposed. Therefore, I can afford these matters limited weight.
18. As the appeal property is already a family dwelling, it is likely that the occupants currently support local facilities. There is no compelling evidence before me that the proposal would increase the number of occupants or the likely contribution of the household to those facilities. Therefore, this carries very little weight as a potential benefit of the proposal.
19. Concern has been raised in the officer report regarding the proposed rooftop garden as an alternative to ground level garden space. However, in view of my findings above, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter in detail.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. Although the proposal could result in some benefits, taken individually and cumulatively, they would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area that I have identified above, to which I afford significant weight given the importance placed on good design in local and national planning policy. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate a decision otherwise would be appropriate. Thus, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Ellison

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR