



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 14 September 2021

by F Rafiq BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/21/3274148

St Edward's Parish Hall, Thurloe Street, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5SG

- 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 John Corrigan (Diocese of Salford) against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 126736/FO/2020, dated 16 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2020.
 - The development is described as the controlled demolition of St Edward's Parish Hall, removal of all waste and reinstatement of the building footprint with macadam surfacing with associated surface water drainage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the controlled demolition of St Edward's Parish Hall, removal of all waste and reinstatement of the building footprint with macadam surfacing with associated surface water drainage at St Edward's Parish Hall, Thurloe Street, Rusholme, Manchester, M14 5SG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 126736/FO/2020, dated 16 April 2020, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2021 (the Framework). Whilst the paragraph numbers have changed in regard to those relevant to the main issue of this case, the substance thereof remains the same as the 2019 iteration. I have sought comments from the main parties and taken any comments made into consideration.
3. There is a difference between the main parties on whether the appeal scheme included the use of the land for car parking. It did not form part of the description of development on the application form and the submitted drawings also did not identify the use of the land for car parking. My attention has been drawn to the Heritage Statement (April 2020) which does reference the provision of additional off street parking. The Council however did not seek a revised description to include car parking and nor were further details on the submitted plans sought. As such, I have considered the appeal as per the description of development applied for.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Victoria Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The Victoria Park Conservation Area (conservation area) is mainly residential and contains large buildings set within spacious grounds. It also contains a number of church buildings, one of which is on the appeal site, St Edward's Church. There is variation in the building styles in the area, but the built form, comprising of larger properties within spacious grounds reflects the development of the area through the 19th Century for wealthy residents and contributes to the significance of the conservation area.
6. The Parish Hall is a modest, simple structure that is situated to the rear of the Church and Presbytery on the appeal site. The area around the Parish Hall contains a parking area that is accessed from Thurloe Street. The Parish Hall is situated close to Walmer Street East, which contained a vehicular access, although this appeared to be closed and not in use.
7. There is disagreement between the main parties regarding the contribution that the Parish Hall makes to the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area. I accept that it does form part of a group of buildings on the Church site which points to the evolution of the Church and its supporting functions over time. It is however acknowledged that the original building has been replaced and is no longer in its original use as a school. However, the current structure does contain some older brickwork and evidence of the original school building. Whilst in itself these factors should not automatically mean that the building does not have noteworthy architectural and/or historic merit, I consider the contribution the appeal building makes to the significance of the Conservation Area to be more limited than that suggested by the Council. The significance of the area primarily relates to the architectural and historic value as a predominantly residential area, comprising of grander buildings from the 19th Century. St Edward's Church and other referenced church buildings in the Conservation Area, such as St John Chrysostom also have some importance in terms of the social history and development of the area and appear as notable landmark buildings. The more modest Parish Hall however, plays a much lesser role in the significance of the conservation area due to its smaller scale and its discreet positioning.
8. The Council suggest that part of its significance is that it illustrates the historic close grained built form and that the line of the former Lloyd Street (now called Walmer Street East) would be lost if the building is demolished. The denser built form areas to the west of the site, including Walmer Street East, are however outside the conservation area and contrast with the spacious characteristic that defines the conservation area. Furthermore, based on my site observations, the wall and metal gates at the site boundary have already altered the historic street pattern. Although the Parish Hall has a simple form architecturally and does not detract from the area, I do not consider that it contributes to the special interest of the conservation area which consists of larger scale Victorian buildings of varying styles but with rich levels of architectural detailing. I therefore find that the appeal building makes only a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. It is common ground between the main parties that the St Edward's Church building itself could be identified as a non-designated heritage asset. On the appeal site this was the first and most important part of the group of buildings, with its use as a place of worship. Because of this, the proposed demolition of

the later Parish Hall, which is no longer in its original use as a school, would not lead to the historic significance of the Church being greatly diminished.

10. The footprint of the demolished building would be replaced with a macadam finish. Although this is said to be of poor quality in terms of materials and would comprise of an unbroken finish, it would assimilate with the hardsurfacing which already surrounds the Church Hall on a number of sides. I also note the widespread use of this surface material in the conservation area. Given this, and that the development would be at surface level in an enclosed location to the rear of the site, it would not be readily seen from public vantage points. As such, I consider that it would sit comfortably in its context and not be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
11. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposed development would preserve both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the significance of which principally derives from its development in the 19th Century as a planned residential area of larger buildings. It would, therefore, not be harmful, thereto. As such, I find no conflict with Policies SP 1, EN 3 or DM 1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document which seek, amongst other matters, to preserve or where possible, enhance the historic environment. Although saved Policy DC18 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan does state that consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will only be granted in a limited number of circumstances, I do not consider the development would conflict with its objectives which are to preserve or enhance the character of conservation areas.
12. The Framework sets out at Paragraph 207 that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance and I have found this to be the case with the appeal building. The proposal would accord with Section 16 of the Framework, which seeks, amongst other matters, to sustain the significance of heritage assets.

Other Matter

13. I note reference to the condition of the appeal building and that this is said to be a result of the lack of maintenance and that the Parish Hall building could be reused. This matter does not however alter my finding on the main issue.

Conditions

14. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council and other parties, having regard to the six tests set out in the Framework. For the sake of clarity and enforceability, I have amended the conditions as necessary.
15. In addition to the standard condition limiting the lifespan of the planning permission, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. Conditions are also needed requiring details of the boundary wall reinstatement in the interests of the character and appearance of the conservation area, for a Construction Management Plan, including details of the hours of construction/demolition in the interest of the neighbouring occupiers living conditions, and on a surface water drainage scheme to ensure adequate drainage. I don't however consider it necessary for a condition requiring foul and surface water to be drained separately as the appeal development is for the demolition of a building and resurfacing rather than the construction of a new building. I also do not consider a condition on bats to be necessary given

no evidence of bats was found and the potential for the building to support bats is limited. The appellant has indicated that he has no objections to the imposition of the pre-commencement conditions.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other relevant material considerations, the appeal is allowed.

F Rafiq

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Location Plan (Drawing No: 2019/29/01)
 - Proposed Demolition Site Management Plan (Drawing No: 2019/29/02)
 - Proposed Demolition Reinstatement Plan (Drawing No: 2019/29/03)
- 3) No demolition shall take place until a scheme for the reinstatement of the boundary wall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) No demolition shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall provide for:
 - i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - iii) storage of plant and materials;
 - iv) wheel washing facilities;
 - v) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during demolition/construction;
 - vi) delivery, demolition and construction working hours;
 - vii) community consultation strategy with local businesses and residents on the works.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.
- 5) Prior to the formation of the macadam surfacing, surface water drainage works shall have been implemented in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Before any details are submitted to the local planning authority an assessment shall be carried out of the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system, having regard to Defra's non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (or any subsequent version), and the results of the assessment shall have been provided to the local planning authority. Where a sustainable drainage scheme is to be provided, the submitted details shall:
 - i) provide information about the design storm period and intensity, the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site and the measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters;
 - ii) include a timetable for its implementation; and,
 - iii) provide, a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.

End of Schedule