



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2022

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31/05/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/22/3290536

Westholme, 2 The Springs, Bowdon WA14 3JH

- 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 Jason Furnivall against the decision of Trafford Council.
 - The application Ref 104254/HHA/21, dated 8 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as “erection of a single storey rear extension and garage building following demolition of existing rear extensions and side garage; installation of roof lights on main roof of building; and erection of new front boundary wall, piers and railings.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal submission included a heritage statement and some amended plans, which the Council have not seen. An appeal should not be used to evolve a proposal. Therefore, my decision has been made on the original application documents and plans. However, notwithstanding this, had these documents been appropriately submitted they would not have altered my findings.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and whether it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Devisdale Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The host dwelling is within the Devisdale Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, requires that I pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that conservation area. Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that heritage assets, as irreplaceable resources, ‘should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance’ and paragraph 199 confirms ‘great weight’ should be given to their conservation.
5. The CA is considered historically and architecturally significant due to its purposeful layout in the late 19th century to create a social neighbourhood adjacent to Dunham Park (a large and important country estate). The properties that characterise the CA are grand houses in a variety of revival architectural styles within large verdant plots along tree lined streets set

around the open space known as The Devisdale. It is also noted that there are some more modern properties within the CA but in the main these are still within well proportioned, verdant plots set back from the road.

6. The host dwelling is a good example of one of the revival architectural styles within the southern part of the CA, known as a Bowdon villa. The significant features of the dwelling are the material pallet, its form and style, and its relationship to the garden and road. For these reasons I am in agreeance with the main parties who consider the dwelling to be a positive contributor to the CA and therefore a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 203 of the Framework states that in relation to non-designated heritage assets 'a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'
7. The proposed extension would require the demolition of the existing extensions (the garage and orangery). It would be contemporary, light weight and predominantly glazed. The garage and dining room elements of the proposed extension, which would replace the existing garage and orangery, would be broadly similar in form, layout, height, and location within the site to that which they are replacing. The proposed garage would have a simple roof form and be clearly identifiable as a garage like the existing, whilst the proposed roof funnel and glazing of the dining room would provide a modern interpretation of the existing lanterned roof and front to back glazing of the orangery. Their design would not be more impacting than the existing garage and orangery, albeit contemporary rather than traditional. Therefore, these parts of the extension, in isolation, would have a neutral impact on the form of the host dwelling and preserve its relationship with the CA.
8. The main part of the proposed extension (the kitchen/dining/living area inclusive of the first floor terraces, as described in the decision notice description) would link the proposed garage and dining room. It would require the complete removal of all the ground floor architectural features and a section of the gabled projection, from the rear elevation. Due to the floor to ceiling glazing the internal layout would be highly visible, not less the flattening and treatment of the adjoining wall between the main house and proposed extension with a bank of kitchen cabinets. This would create a disparate and uncomfortable relationship between the traditional form of the host dwelling, retained in the upper floors, and the modernity of that proposed. The proposed funnel roof over the dining area is set away from the host dwelling allowing it space and providing a clear delineation from the original form of the building. However, the funnel roof over the main part of the extension along with the proposed first floor terraces would create an overly complicated roof form which would partially obscure and dominate the first floor.
9. The lack of connection between the kitchen/dining/living area and host dwelling would be further exasperated by its overall size as well as the cumulative effect with the proposed garage and dining room when viewed from the rear. The proposed extension would swamp the rear elevation, fail to reflect the existing character of the host dwelling, and significantly harm its historical form. The loss of relationship between the historic form of the host dwelling and its rear garden as well as the awkward connection between old and new architectural styles would harm the character and appearance of the CA.

10. Turning to the proposed light wells to the front of the host dwelling. They would be full depth and substantial in form, providing outdoor courtyards to the lower ground floor rooms. They would be modern in context and style and would require the loss of a large proportion of the existing landscaping. Although it is appreciated that they are unlikely to be directly visible other than when entering the property, their form would be oversized and out of proportion to the front elevation of the host dwelling. The loss of landscaping would also reduce the open but verdant character of the property frontage thus altering its relationship with the road. Therefore, the lightwells would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the CA.
11. My attention has been drawn to other examples of both light wells and modern extensions within the local area. Details of these were not submitted therefore I am unable to make comparison. During my visit I was able to see examples of such features in the wider area, but they appeared to be substantially smaller than that proposed or related to more modern properties.
12. The proposed rooflights in the side and rear elevations would be large. However, due to the height of the host dwelling and chimney positions I was unable to find any vantage point, either within the site or the surrounding area, which would allow clear views of the side and rear roof elevations. If the rooflights were of an appropriate design flush with the roof form, it is possible that they could be installed without harm to the character and appearance of either the host dwelling or CA. The proposed overall site landscaping would retain the verdant nature of the grounds so would also preserve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and CA, and details could be secured by condition.
13. The proposed boundary treatments would require the realignment of the vehicle entrance into the site. This would ensure the longevity and health of the copper beech which is currently severely constrained by the existing access. The copper beech is an important feature within the character and appearance of the CA, so its retention would mitigate the limited harm caused by the repositioning of the existing vehicle entrance.
14. The proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that when less than substantial harm is found then it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. Several the proposed benefits relate to living conditions, specifically better facilities, lighter basement and roof spaces, on site electric charging points, and secure bicycle storage. These would solely benefit the occupants of the dwelling and do not constitute public benefits in this case. Landscaping improvements (including bat protection measures), potential biodiversity enhancements and improved sustainability measures / carbon footprints could be considered public benefits. However, in relation to the scale of the scheme these benefits would be limited. The removal of non-original features, namely the extensions and pedestrian access, and the retention of the copper beech tree would also constitute public benefit, but this too would be limited as they are only a relatively minor part of the proposal. The proposed public benefits do not, therefore, outweigh the harm found.
16. The proposed development would, therefore, harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would not preserve or enhance the

character and appearance of the CA. It would be contrary to the character and heritage protection aims of the Framework, and Policies L7 and R1 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012) (Local Plan), insofar as they relate to the preserving and enhancing of heritage assets, and design. The Local Plan policies are supported by several Supplementary Planning Documents (5.10 and 5.10a, Devisdale Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan and 4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations) and the proposed development would conflict with them also.

Other Matters

17. The lack of harm to the living conditions of the occupants of the host dwelling or neighbouring properties and lack of public objection are neutral factors so do not mediate the harm found to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and CA.

Conclusion

18. The appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan for the reasons given above. There are no sufficiently weighted material considerations, including the approach in the Framework, that would indicate a decision otherwise. The appeal should, therefore, be dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR