



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 March 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/23/3315660

33 Willow Way, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6JT

- 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 Ms Helen Sharman against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 134510/FH/2022, dated 19 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Proposed two storey side and rear extension.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies DC1.1 and DC1.2 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) and policies SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's LDF Core Strategy DPD (2012) which together seek to encourage well designed developments that have regard to scale, massing and siting and to the character and appearance of the property and the street scene. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also encourages high quality design. UDP policy DC1.3 referred to by the Council is not relevant as it refers to detailed criteria, none of which apply to this proposal.
3. 33 Willow Way is a semi-detached dwelling built in the Victorian/Edwardian period in a street of dwellings built mainly in the same period. Whilst there are some minor differences in design and style and some dwellings have been altered or extended, in the main they retain much of their traditional character. Most of the pairs of semi-detached houses are balanced in their scale and proportions and this, together with the retention of period detailing and materials, gives a strong sense of rhythm and general consistency which contributes very positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The appeal dwelling was built to a design typical of its period with a two storey projecting bay with a gabled roof as its main feature and a set back two storey element with a pitched roof. It occupies a wider plot than most of the other dwellings with a lean-to car port on the drive to the side of the property. It has been previously extended with a wide, two storey side extension approved in 2001 which is almost flush with the front wall and only slightly set down from the ridge. Although its detail and materials match those of the original, the

- pair has been unbalanced to some extent by this extension and by the replacement of the original front canopy on the adjoining dwelling.
5. The proposal comprises a two-storey side extension and a single storey rear extension which would create additional living accommodation for the appellant's elderly relatives. The single storey rear extension would extend 1 metre beyond the existing outrigger between the proposed extension and the existing dwelling. I have noted that the Council has not objected to the rear part of the extension.
 6. The side extension would be attached to the existing side extension and would remove the car port, leaving a gap of some 0.9m between the dwelling and the side boundary, slightly more than the approximately 0.3m gap of the neighbouring dwelling at no 31 which has also been extended to the side and rear. It would be some 3 metres in width and would project around 2.5 metres beyond the rear elevation of the dwelling. On the front elevation it would be very slightly recessed behind the existing extension with a similar ridge height.
 7. I accept that the small gap between the dwellings would not be uncharacteristic of this street in which most of the gaps between dwellings are narrow, the appeal site being an exception and that the site is physically capable of accommodating the proposal. It is also clear that the proposal would reflect the style and detail of the existing dwelling.
 8. However, the combined width of the proposal on the front elevation together with the existing extension would be excessive and disproportionate in relation to the original dwelling. The impact of its width on the scale and massing of the dwelling would be exacerbated by the insufficient set back from the front wall and insufficient set down from both the ridge of the existing extension and the main ridge. This would undermine the dominance of the projecting bay and the two side extensions would appear disproportionate to the scale of the original dwelling. As such, it would not be a subservient extension and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the dwelling. It would have a severe and further unbalancing effect on the pair and this would disrupt the general consistency and rhythm of the street scene.
 9. Whilst subservience is not always appropriate for extensions, in this case it is because the dwelling has an attractive original form that should remain the dominant element and as a semi-detached house, care is needed to retain a sense of balance and proportion.
 10. The appellant's argument that it creates interest to have houses of varying size and design in the street scene does not apply in this context because in this street, the semi-detached houses are generally consistent in their size and design and as I have noted earlier, this enhances the character and appearance of the area. Varying size and design of semi-detached dwellings is generally less acceptable than for detached dwellings.
 11. Even if a single storey side extension could be achieved instead as permitted development, the appellant has indicated that it would not meet the family's needs and, in any case, I am not persuaded that it would be more harmful than the current proposal because it would retain a gap and a greater sense of proportion at first floor level. Whilst a flat roof dormer extension may harm the character of the dwelling at the rear despite the existence of others nearby, there is no evidence that this is a realistic possibility and I am not persuaded

that these are likely fall-back positions that might provide justification for overriding the harm that would be caused in this case.

12. I have noted the contemporary-styled extensions and alterations allowed by the Council at the semi-detached dwelling at 43 Willow Way. I am unaware of the circumstances of that permission but although the single storey front extension is wide, the two storey side extension is set back significantly from the front elevation and it is not therefore directly comparable with this proposal.
13. The Council's policies seek to enable people to adapt their homes in appropriate ways to meet changing household needs and I have taken into account the appellant's wish to provide accommodation for elderly family members. However, I have no compelling evidence that the scheme proposed is essential to meet any personal needs that might outweigh the impact on character and appearance or is the only means of accommodating those needs at the property.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development, by reason of its scale, massing and siting, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. It would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to earlier and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. It would also fail to accord with the Framework. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector