



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2023

by L Hughes BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/23/3318507

17 Ambrose Drive, Manchester M20 2YE

- 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 Kamran Haq against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 135391/FH/2022, dated 4 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two-storey side extension with replacement detached outbuilding within rear garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling on a corner plot of Ambrose Drive and Highcroft Avenue, both being cul-de-sacs. The plot includes a side driveway leading to a detached garage. The immediate context consists predominantly of semi-detached dwellings. Those along Ambrose Drive are somewhat varied in character, but dwellings on Highcroft Avenue display a particularly strong consistency of form and materiality, despite some alterations. Notwithstanding the exception of the header pair and the street's slight curve, they are also positioned with very similar front set-backs from the highway. This is replicated by the side elevation of the appeal dwelling. Together this creates a strong and slightly curved building line around the whole cul-de-sac. This overall consistency contributes to the character of a pleasant and ordered residential street.
4. I agree with the main parties that the proposed replacement outbuilding would be acceptable, due to its siting to the rear and its subservient scale and massing. I also agree that in relation to its host, the conjoined dwelling, and the Ambrose Drive dwellings, the side extension would have an acceptable design, style, and appearance. It would be subservient due to a front set back and a dropped ridge line from the main ridge line. While the first floor would include a prominent front dormer, in the context of the existing design of the house and its somewhat similar arrangement, and the range in character of properties along the street, this would not be incongruous. The palette of materials would also be in-keeping with those on the existing dwelling.

5. However, the nature of the proposal's location on the corner plot means that it would also be viewed in relation to the context of the building line and massing of the main Highcroft Avenue dwellings. As outlined above, and as noted on my site visit, the curve in the street is not so pronounced that this uniform set-back is not apparent. The pair of dwellings pushed back beyond the turning head appear subservient in the streetscene due to their positioning, and so do not create an obtrusive discrepancy. Similarly, the side extension at No. 1 Highcroft Avenue does not project forwards to alter the building line.
6. Therefore, a single protrusion in this set-back would be dominant and obtrusive. The appeal proposal would appear as 2 storeys from oblique angles and from the head of the cul-de-sac, and so would present significant massing into what is currently open views. It would also alter the relative symmetry of the form and massing at the street's entrance. Although a gap would remain between the side wall of the extension and the side boundary, and larger than that required by Policy DC1.4 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) (1995), this would not sufficiently mitigate the issues I have identified. Similarly, although the property's tall hedging would obscure the proposal to some extent, this would not fully mitigate its impact on the streetscene, and also cannot be relied upon in perpetuity.
7. In conclusion therefore, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscene, and would conflict with Policies DM1 and SP1 of Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012), saved Policies DC1.1 and DC1.2 of the UDP, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Together, these seek high quality design and creation of well designed places, and development that has regard to the character of the surrounding area, including through its design, scale and layout, and projection. I attach this harm significant weight. The Council's reason for refusal also includes UDP Policy DC1.3, but this relates to specific aspects of extensions which I do not find directly relevant to this appeal.

Other Matters

8. The proposal would provide additional living accommodation for the appellant's family, which is referenced as desirable in UDP Policy DC1.1. However, this would only be a private benefit to which I therefore attach limited weight, and this does not outweigh the harm which I have identified above. While the proposal may comply with some aspects of those policies cited on the decision notice, as well as others including UDP Policy DC1.4, I have identified conflict with the development plan overall. Although this location within the appeal site may have the least impact on neighbouring occupiers, and there have been no objections, this does not equate to a lack of harm. This therefore does not alter my findings in this respect.

Conclusion

9. The scheme conflicts with the development plan as a whole. With no other material considerations indicating otherwise, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Lora Hughes

INSPECTOR