



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2023

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/23/3326118

10 Marmion Drive, Manchester M21 9JD

- 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 and Mrs D Nightingale against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application 136244/FH/2023, dated 13 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is new two-storey side and single storey rear extensions to existing semi-detached property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed side extension on: the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and the living conditions of the neighbours at No.8 Marmion Drive with regard outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No.10 Marmion Drive (No.10) is a semi-detached, two-storey dwelling located at the head of Marmion Drive, a residential cul-de-sac.
4. The boundaries of the residential plots at the head of the cul-de-sac radiate from the road, such that No.10 has a relatively narrow frontage, with paved driveway to the front and side, but a tapered rear garden. It is proposed to construct a narrow two-storey extension to the side of No.10 which would be set back from the principal elevation by around 0.9m at ground floor and would project to the rear parallel with the common boundary with the non-attached neighbour at No.8 Marmion Drive (No.8). The first floor would cantilever the ground floor by around 0.5m on the principal elevation, so set back by only around 0.4m.
5. The proposed side extension would broadly align with the eaves of the roof of No.10 on its principal elevation and would have a flat roof planted with sedum. As the extension projects rearward, the first floor would be further cantilevered, set closer to the boundary with No.8, and would be higher than the front, such that the sedum roof would sit above the eaves level of the host

dwelling. I accept that the narrow extension on the frontage would be subservient to No.10 in terms of its height, but the minimal set back of the cantilevered first floor would result in a structure which competes with the principal elevation, appearing an unsympathetic and prominent addition. The extension would be clad in green copper which would contrast with the traditional red brick and render of the host dwelling. Whilst I accept such cladding is often visually 'lightweight' and of high quality, in combination with the lack of a meaningful set-back and cantilever design, the contrast would draw the eye to the unsympathetic addition.

6. Because of its location and the building line of No.8, which is set forward of No.10, the appeal property is only visible from the head of the cul-de-sac. Whilst the three pairs of semi-detached dwellings at the head of the cul-de-sac have been altered and extended, including to the side, I observed on my site visit that all have equal prominence and there is an overall, cohesive appearance to the streetscene with characteristic features of the dwellings, such as the ground and first floor bay with gable, retained. No.10 makes a positive contribute to that character and the composition of the streetscene. The appellant's own evidence shows (in the Visibility Splay/Impact Assessment) that there are vantage points within the cul-de-sac where the narrow frontage of the cantilevered side extension would be seen, but also the wider, higher section behind. Although it is accepted that the rear section would visually recede as the site tapers, I nonetheless find the stepped and staggered cantilevered design means that the extension would appear an incongruous and obtrusive feature, unduly prominent within the streetscene. This would be to the detriment of its cohesive character and appearance.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples of side extensions to a number of other dwellings in Marmion Drive. I do not have full details of these extensions before me, but I observed that where dwellings have been extended to the side, over two-storeys, they are well set back from the principal elevation and do not compete with it. My attention has also been drawn to a recently constructed two-storey extension to No.12 St Clements Road which, I observed, is similar to the appeal proposal in respect of its cantilevered design, with a minimal ground and first floor set back. Whilst I accept the similarities, I found the context of St Clements Road to be mixed in terms of the design, form and typology of dwellings, lacking the cohesive character of Marmion Drive described above. I therefore find that these examples lend very limited support to the appeal proposals before me, which in any event falls to be considered on its own merits.
8. Therefore, on the first main issue I conclude that the proposed side extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, it would conflict with policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 of Manchester's Core Strategy, Development Plan Document (2012) (CS) in so far as they require development to be of good design, create well designed places that enhance character and are appropriate in their scale and form. It would also conflict with saved Policy DC1 of the Manchester Plan, Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) (UDP) which requires extensions to dwellings to have regard to the general character of the property and its overall appearance in the streetscene. Finally, it would fail to meet the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) to achieve well-designed places.

Living conditions

9. No.8 Marmion Drive (No.8) is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling which is set forward of No.10, so that its rear building line (minus a single storey lean-to) broadly aligns with the front elevation of No.10. The proposed two-storey side extension to No.10 would project rearward, parallel to the common boundary with No.8. The first floor would be cantilevered over the ground floor, off set only 1m from this boundary and its flat (sedum) roof would be above the eaves of the host dwelling, so around 6m in height. Because of the siting of the dwellings relative to each other, the extension would project well beyond the rear elevation of No.8 and along much of the length of its modest rear garden.
10. I note that the principal rear windows of No.8 are located close to the boundary with its attached neighbour at No.6 Marmion Drive and therefore the outlook from these would remain predominantly over the rear garden. However, the proposed first floor extension would present a high, largely unrelieved elevation very close to the common boundary with No.8 and would appear unduly overbearing and visually obtrusive from its side patio and the rear garden, harming the outlook of the occupiers of that property. Whilst it is acknowledged that there has been no objection to the proposals from the neighbours at No.8, this, in itself, is not an indication of an absence of harm.
11. Given its size and orientation to the south-east of No.8, the proposed two-storey side extension would cause some loss of light during the morning and early afternoon. The Shadow Study submitted in evidence by the appellant, however, shows that the impact would be minimal and there would be no additional overshadowing of the principal windows to the rear of No.8. I have no reason to dispute this evidence and I am not therefore persuaded that there would be such a loss of light to cause harm to the living conditions of the neighbours.
12. Notwithstanding my conclusion in respect of loss of light, I conclude on the second main issue that the proposed two-storey extension would cause harm to the living conditions of the neighbours at No.8 through a loss of outlook. The proposals therefore conflict with CS policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 and saved UDP Policy DC1 which together require development, including extensions, to be of good design, have regard to the effects on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of residents. It would also conflict with paragraph 130 of the Framework which requires development to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing users.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR