



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2023

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/D/23/3327610

40 Northenden Road, Gatley, Cheadle, Stockport SK8 4DN

- 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 Tom Lord against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application DC/088402, dated 3 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is integral garage to side elevation (in addition to previous extension) and outdoor garden building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The Council have raised no issue in respect of the proposed outdoor garden building and I have no reason to form a different view. The main issue in this case is therefore the effect of the proposed integral garage on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Gatley Village Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. No.40 Northenden Road (No.40) is a four storey (basement to loft) detached dwelling which fronts Northenden Road and is identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset. It is within the Gatley Village Conservation Area (the CA). Any development must be considered within the context of Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires that I pay particular attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
4. The CA boundary is relatively tightly drawn around properties and open space either side of Church Road and around the village centre at its junction with Gatley Road and Northenden Road. The Gatley Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2008) (CACA) explains that the CA boundary was extended in 2008 to include several properties along Northenden Road, including the appeal property.
5. The significance of the CA is derived from its attractive village layout which retains much of its original character and includes a number of buildings of architectural and historic merit, built using traditional materials and detailing. No.40 forms one of a group of five properties (Nos. 32 to 40) which reflect the

historic development of the area during the Edwardian period and share a polychromatic brickwork design, with front bay window (semi-basement to first floor) and front gable-ended roof dormers. I observed on my site visit that the intended uniformity in design of this group of properties results in an attractive composition that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA.

6. The proposed garage would extend to the side of No.40 by around 3.7m, with a minimal offset from its front elevation. It would project around 6.5m to the rear to meet a single storey extension which wraps around the rear of the dwelling. The extension would accommodate a single car, accessed by a garage door which would extend much of the width of the extension.
7. I acknowledge that the garage extension would be brick built and that the polychromatic variation in brickwork has been reinstated by the appellant, therein retaining some of the original and important architectural detailing of the host dwelling. The extension has also been designed with a hipped roof to diminish its scale and massing. However, the proposed garage would extend over half the width of the original front elevation and this, combined with its relatively low profile, would fail to respect and reflect the historic proportions of its Edwardian host. I concur with the appellant that conservation areas are not intended as museums, but I observed that integral garages are not prevalent in the CA, nor would be traditional to its original character.
8. Further, the minimal setback from the front elevation of No.40 means that the proposed garage extension would be very conspicuous in the streetscene and would appear an obtrusive feature, rather than a natural addition to the host dwelling. It would also disrupt the intentional uniformity of the group of dwellings at Nos.32 to 40, to the detriment of the positive contribution I found they make to the CA, despite their location on its outskirts. The proposed garage extension would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
9. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. That is still so, irrespective of whether the potential harm is 'less than substantial'. The harm I find in this case would be 'less than substantial' and in accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework, the public benefits must be balanced against any harm found. No public benefits arising from the proposal have been identified in the submission, and whilst the proposal would meet the accommodation and storage needs of the appellant, this is a purely private benefit.
10. To conclude on this main issue, given the above, and in the absence of any defined public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gatley Village Conservation Area. Consequently, in addition to failing to meet the requirements of the Act and Chapter 16 of the Framework, it would conflict with Policy SIE.3 of the Core Strategy DPD (2011) which, amongst other things, states that harm to the significance of a heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification.
11. The garage extension would also conflict with saved Policy HC1.3 of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (2006) because it is of a scale and design that is not sympathetic to its host dwelling.

Conclusion

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

R Jones

INSPECTOR