



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2024

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/D/23/3335604

38 Whitebrook Road, Manchester M14 6FD

- 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 Arooj Arshad against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application 138305/FH/2023, dated 11 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 20 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is creation of a first floor side and rear extension and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have also dealt with another appeal (Ref. APP/B4215/D/23/3335605) for this site. As the appeals were not linked, it is subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed first floor extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area, and on the living conditions of the neighbours, with regards outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. No.38 Whitebrook Road (No.38) is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling sited at the end of a row of dwellings on the north side of Whitebrook Road.
5. No.38 benefits from an existing single storey side extension that continues the principal front elevation of the dwelling, but is set behind a porch. It is proposed to replace this porch and extend at first floor over the existing side extension, but offset from the front elevation by 1m. The eaves of the first floor side extension would be the same height as the host roof, but the ridge (of the hipped roof) would be lower, by around 1m. This element is common between the two appeal proposals.
6. I observed on my site visit that, whilst dwellings on either side of Whitebrook Road are similar in design and appearance, with characteristic double bays and hipped roofs, many have been altered and extended over the years. There is, therefore, a degree of variety in the streetscene. The proposed first floor side

extension would not appear incongruous in this context, and its set back from the principal elevation of No.38 (albeit by only 1m) means it would appear subordinate to it. Further, because of the location of No.38 at the end of the row and its siting perpendicular to dwellings on Caxton Road, extending to the side at first floor would not result in a 'terracing effect' to the streetscene, as alleged by the Council.

7. The proposed first floor extension to the side of No.38 would project a depth of around 6.78m and wrap around the rear over part of an existing ground floor rear extension. On one side, the proposed first floor extension would be only slightly offset from the party wall with the attached neighbour at No.36 Whitebrook Road (No.36), projecting a depth at this point of around 2.27m. The proposed extension is then angled (by around 45 degrees) from the boundary, projecting on the other side around 4m from the existing rear elevation, albeit offset from the ground floor by 1m.
8. The proposed first floor rear extension has been designed with a double gable, with a ridge height around 1.35m below that of the host roof. Whilst I accept that this serves to reduce the overall massing, by projecting so close to the party wall with No.36, the extension would all but consume, and unduly dominate, the rear elevation. Rather than providing a 'visual break' (as argued by the appellant), the 1m step-in (on the opposite side) only serves to unbalance the composition of the rear elevation.
9. Planning permission (ref. 137639/FH/203) has previously been granted by the Council for a first floor side and rear extension of No.38 (*the approved scheme*). I accept that the permitted scheme has a realistic prospect of being implemented should this appeal not succeed. As such, it comprises a fallback position, a material consideration to which significant weight can be afforded. The appeal scheme is similar to the approved scheme in respect of the maximum depth of the first floor extension. There is, however, a substantial difference in width. The approved scheme is well set in from either edge of the existing ground floor extension, and would read as a subordinate addition. I find the fallback to be preferable to the appeal proposal, and so does not justify the harm that would be created in this case.
10. I therefore conclude on the first main issue that the proposed first floor rear extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Consequently, it would conflict with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and with policies DM1, EN1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) (CS) which together require development to be of good design, that enhances or creates character, and is appropriate in form, scale and massing. It would also conflict with saved Policy DC1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) (UDP) in so far as it requires residential extensions to have regard to the general character of the property, not be excessively large or bulky, and be subservient to the original house.

Living conditions

11. As described above, at the rear, the proposed first floor extension would be offset only slightly from the party wall with the adjoined neighbour at No.36 Whitebrook Road (No.36). It would project around 2.3m from the rear elevation along the common boundary before being returned at a 45 degree angle. I observed on my site visit that No.36 has a first floor window on its rear

elevation close to the party wall which is designed as a shallow bay, such that there is a degree of outlook toward No.38.

12. However, the proposed first floor extension has been designed so that the 45 degree angle taken from the centre of the this window would not be encroached. Combined with its minimum projection, I do not find the proposal would appear unduly overbearing from this window. The principal outlook from the bay would remain over the flat roof of the ground floor extension to No.36 and the garden beyond. No.38 is sited perpendicular to dwellings fronting Caxton Road, and backs onto dwellings on Wilbraham Road, sharing common boundaries. I observed, however, that the proposed first-floor extension would be a reasonable separation distance from these dwellings, and I am not persuaded that the proposed extension would result in a visually obtrusive massing, as alleged by the Council, such that it would cause harm to the living conditions of these neighbours.
13. For these reasons, I conclude on the second main issue that the proposed first floor extension would not cause harm to the living conditions of neighbours, through loss of outlook. There would, therefore, be no conflict with CS policies DM1, SP1 and saved UDP Policy DC1 in so far as they require development (including residential extensions) to have regard to the effect upon amenity of neighbouring occupiers and the wellbeing of residents. Nor would there be conflict with paragraph 135 of the Framework which requires development to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conclusion

14. Although I find no harm to the living conditions of neighbours, I nonetheless find that the proposed first floor rear extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR