



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 May 2024

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/23/3333681

190-192 Flixton Road, Flixton, Manchester, M41 5DR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Peace Village Developers Ltd against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 111240/HHA/23.
 - The development proposed is the extension of two semi-detached dwellings, incorporating two storey side extensions and roof space development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council's decision letter refers to Policy JP-P1 of the emerging Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan. This plan has since been adopted. In relation to the main issues in this appeal, changes between the draft and final versions of the policy are minor. Therefore, the change in policy context has not altered my assessment of the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - whether the parking arrangements would be suitable and safe.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The area surrounding the appeal site is predominately residential, characterised by detached and semi-detached properties of varying ages and styles. Houses in this area generally have front and back gardens, but the plot sizes are not particularly large, and the houses appear quite close together. Despite this, the nearby areas of open space, mature street trees, and planting in front gardens, give the area a green and spacious character.
5. The appeal concerns a pair of semi-detached houses of a style typical of the 1970s. The building is one of the few examples of this style of housing in the immediate area. Its simple design and roof form differ from that of other houses nearby, both newer and older, many of which have bays and gables on the front elevations. In their largely unaltered state, the houses at the appeal

site sit comfortably in their setting, and contribute to the diverse character of the area.

6. The proposed side extensions on either side of the appeal property would significantly increase the overall width of the building, so that it would occupy most of the plot. I acknowledge that visual gaps would be retained between the houses and the properties on either side, and the proposal would not result in a terracing effect. However, the scale and form of the proposed extensions and alterations would increase the prominence of the houses in the streetscene, whilst failing to respect their original character.
7. Although they would not overlook neighbouring properties, the proposed addition of large front dormers would appear at odds with the existing simple roof forms, which are typical of houses from this period. In addition, the vertical pattern of fenestration on the front elevations would fail to reflect the horizontal emphasis of the existing windows.
8. Extending the houses together provides an opportunity to do so in a way which retains the balance of the existing pair, but this would not be achieved through the appeal scheme. The proposed extension at 192 Flixton Road (No. 192) would be notably wider than that of the adjoining semi, No. 190. The extent of the difference would unbalance the pair of semis, and would further detract from the original character of the houses.
9. As noted below, the provision of parking spaces at the front of the houses would involve a loss of soft landscaping. This would limit the opportunity to soften the large expanse of built form, and would erode the existing green character of the area.
10. For these reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy L7.1 of the Trafford Core Strategy 2012 and PFE Policy JP-P1, which together require that new development is appropriate in its context, respects the character of the area, and enhances the street scene by appropriately addressing scale, massing and elevation treatment. For similar reasons, there would be conflict with the requirements for high quality design set out in paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
11. The proposals would also be inconsistent with the Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD4), which advises that extensions should reflect the character, scale and form of the original dwelling.

Parking arrangements

12. To meet the Council's parking standards for four-bedroomed houses, the submitted plans show three off-road parking spaces at the front of each dwelling. Having viewed the situation on site, I am satisfied that there would be sufficient space to accommodate cars at the front of the properties without encroaching onto the pavement.
13. The crossover in front of No. 192 already appears to have been widened, so some of the grass verge has been removed. To accommodate additional parking in front of No. 190, an enlarged crossover in front of that property would also be required, which would require a separate application to the

Council. This would involve a further reduction in the grass verge, but this narrow feature makes a limited contribution to the character of the area.

14. The proposed parking arrangements would require some of the existing front garden space to be replaced with hardstanding. This would involve the loss of some areas of soft landscaping, although the plans show that the central section of hedge in front of the houses would remain, along with the existing lawned areas.
15. That said, the submitted plans show the parking spaces as being very close together, and I note the Council's comments that the pedestrian entrances should be a minimum width of 1m. There is sufficient space in front of the two houses to accommodate the full parking requirement with more generous parking spaces and a wider footpath, but this would require a further reduction in soft landscaping. The result would be to detract from the character of the area, as noted above.
16. Overall, whilst acknowledging the effect on the character and appearance of the area, I am satisfied that satisfactory and safe parking arrangements could be achieved at the site. I have identified no conflict with Local Plan Policy L7.2 in relation to access and parking, or with the requirement for safe and suitable access contained in Framework paragraph 114.

Other Matters

17. The proposals would provide the appellant's family with a larger living space and would enable the properties to be upgraded in terms of energy efficiency. However, these objectives could be achieved through a different design, which caused less harm to the character and appearance of the area.
18. I note comments from the occupiers of neighbouring properties regarding overshadowing and overlooking, but as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, I have not considered these matters any further.

Conclusion

19. Whilst satisfactory parking arrangements could be provided, this does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons set out above, the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan and the Framework, and no other considerations outweigh this finding. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR