

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2024

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/24/3343477

14 Woodlands Road, Sale, Trafford M33 2DW

- 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 Mark Leach against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 112366/HHA/23, dated 20 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is refurbishment works including renewal and upgrading of roof coverings, addition of sideways facing sloping rooflight and extension of overhanging eaves to side and rear to facilitate addition of external wall insulation; and application of rendered external wall insulation to the external face of the side and rear walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the dwelling as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The council's concerns relate predominantly to the rendering of the side and rear elevations which is proposed in order to improve the energy efficiency of the house. To facilitate the proposed greater thickness of the walls, it would be necessary to increase the overhang of the roof eaves. The detail of this is provided within the plans.
 4. The dwelling and its attached neighbour are large distinctive brick built houses that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. The appeal property has a front bay set within a forward facing gable. The gable and bay both have ornate brickwork below the eaves and the entire elevation features uniform string courses in differing coloured brick. These string courses extend around the house, incorporating both side chimney breasts. There is also a wider more ornate band of brickwork matching the eaves of the bay which also follows across the side elevation and its chimneys. A second row of ornate brickwork sits just under the eaves. These distinctive features add significantly to the quality of the building. The rear of the property does not
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include a continuation of the string courses but the brick finish to the eaves of the gable, the centre piece of the gable and the brick lintels help to unify the overall appearance of the dwelling.

5. The council consider the property to be a non-designated heritage asset. This was determined as part of the application but the property appears to meet the criteria set out in the council's Executive Report of 2019, provided by the appellant, which provides a basis for such decisions when compiling a list. This is a distinctive property and the brick detailing to the front and side of the house, in particular, add significantly to its quality and interest. The proposed works between the chimneys and to the rear of the side elevation, including the changes to the eaves, would harm the detailing of the brickwork at the eaves and cover up the lower string courses. The colour of the render could be controlled but, in any event, I consider that its addition would result in harm to the character and appearance of the property. The covering of all detailed brickwork to the rear would similarly result in harm although this would be less publicly evident. Overall, the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of this non-designated heritage asset.
6. The property is set back from the road and screened in some views by trees and other garden vegetation. Nevertheless, both the front and side are clearly evident from the street. Although the area within which this property is set has changed and there are other buildings which include rendered finishes, this does not take away from the existing character of the property or suggest that a change in materials would not be harmful. The changes proposed would reduce the quality of the design and overall composition of this house and would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The proposal would be contrary to the design objectives of policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012(CS) as it would not be appropriate in this context. The changes would also represent poor design as they would diminish the quality of this building. It would also conflict with the design objectives of policy JP-P1(1A) of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (2024)(PfE) as it would reduce distinctiveness and would fail to conserve or enhance the historic environment.
8. The proposal has been submitted in order to improve the thermal insulation of the building. This would reduce the need for energy for heating or cooling and improve the efficiency of the property in general. The proposal includes a combination of measures, which are not ideal in terms of its overall objectives but have been selected in order to retain the frontage detailing and side return, to reduce the harm to the building. I afford considerable weight to the objectives or improving the thermal qualities of this house and reducing its future energy demands. I am mindful also of the evidence submitted with regard to alternative measures. Although it is suggested that the works could be reversible, I am not clear how successful or likely this would be and have consider the proposal as submitted.
9. There is clear support for the type of improvement proposed from CS policy L5 which requires that new development should mitigate and reduce its impact on climate change. It encourages the adoption of the principles of energy efficiency. This support for energy efficiency is also included in the council's Supplementary Planning Document SPD4: A Guide for Designing House

Extensions and Alterations 2012 (SPD). There is further support from PfE policies JP-S1 and JP-S2 as these seeks to utilise sustainable construction techniques and promote the retrofitting of existing buildings with measures to improve energy efficiency. Elements of policy JP-P1 offer further support. The declaration by the council of a Climate Emergency on 28 November 2018 and its stated commitment to tackle climate change and to work towards carbon neutrality by 2038 also weighs in its favour. I note the references to the emerging Housing Strategy 2024-2029 and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's "YourHomesBetter" strategy and the retrofit action plan which offer similar support.

10. Given my conclusion that the proposal would result in the harm to the heritage asset and to the character and appearance of the area, this has to be weighed against the considerable support offered for thermal efficiency improvements. I have had regard to the reports submitted and the benefits of this particular approach over others. However, I am not satisfied that the benefits this scheme would bring would be sufficient to outweigh my concerns with regard to the harm that would result to the character and appearance of the area.
11. The *National Planning Policy Framework* 2023 requires that in weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. On balance, the scale of the harm to this non-designated heritage asset would not be outweighed by the proposed benefits to the efficiency of the building or the living conditions of the occupants. I therefore find conflict with the heritage objectives of the *Framework* and PfE policy JP-P2 which advises that proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets will be considered having regard to national planning policy.
12. I am mindful of the three objectives of the *Framework* but consider that the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the environmental harm. As such the proposal does not represent sustainable development when assessed against the *Framework* as a whole.
13. In conclusion, whilst there are significant benefits to the proposal with regard to energy efficiency and future energy requirements; and with regard to the living conditions of the residents, I am not satisfied that these are sufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR