



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2025

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/24/3355747

The Coach House, 7 Cedar Avenue, Altrincham, Trafford WA14 2QR

- 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 Ms Alexandra Plunkett against the decision of Trafford Council.
 - The application Ref is: 113751/HHA/24.
 - The application is for installation of front dormers together with increasing the eaves and ridge height and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of The Downs Conservation Area.

Procedural Matter

3. Since the determination of this application a revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was published on 12 December 2024 whose main focus was not directly relevant to this appeal. Nevertheless, I have determined this appeal in accordance with the revised provisions within the Framework.
4. The description of development used in the heading above differs from that used on the Council's Decision notice and instead the description is that as used by the Appellant on their original application form and appeal form. I consider that the description of development still accurately reflects the proposal before me and as such I have used this description accordingly.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached bungalow dating to around the 1960's. The building is located to the head of a cul de sac that extends off nearby New Street. The cul de sac rises slightly towards the appeal site which is terminates the streetscene with its materials of light render that is highly contrasting to that of the majority of buildings nearby. To the front the existing bungalow sports a protruding front bay window and pedimented arched entrance each flanked by other windows completing the front elevation. Presently the roof slope of the building is relatively shallow and this is reflected upon what appears to be a kitchen extension at the rear.

6. The site is located within The Downs Conservation Area (CA). The CA encompasses the original area of settlement associated with historic Altrincham and the hamlet of Bowdon that was located to the south. It also encompasses the historic lane of The Narrows that forms one of the earliest extant routeways through the area. In terms of built form, most buildings consist of 19th century terrace and semi detached housing associated with the working and middle class communities of the historic town that typically sport strong building frontages facing the roads leading downhill towards the centre of Altrincham.
7. The appeal site is not identified as a building that contributes in a positive manner to the character or appearance of the area, presumably due to its markedly different architectural form when compared to the red brick terraces and other buildings that predominate. Adjacent to the site however is a double fronted building¹ of red brick and typically Victorian proportions that is identified as a positive building within the CA. This structure echoes much of the CA in terms of its materiality but is much grander in terms of its proportions.
8. To the rear of the site runs diagonally the ancient lane called The Narrows that is reputed to have Anglo Saxon origins. This lane is, as its name suggests, a narrow footpath for much of its course but near to the site the path is sunken and as such is significantly enclosed with adjoining banking and foliage.
9. The proposal before me seeks permission to raise the eaves and ridge of the existing bungalow to accommodate rooms within the roof consisting of one bedroom suite and two bathrooms. In order to better accommodate these changes two new gable features would be created to the front elevation, each with a slightly protruding box bay type window. These gable features would be of relatively slender proportions and revised plans show them as being clad in vertical slate to their respective peaks.
10. In considering this appeal I am required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to give 'Special Attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of The Downs Conservation Area. This is reflected in The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), which states that 'Great Weight' should be given to the heritage assets' conservation and also illustrates the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to the creation of sustainable and economically viable communities.
11. As mentioned above the appeal site is visible from the junction of New Street due to the rising topography of the area. Although the building is settled somewhat behind trees the white render that currently exists is still very noticeable and contrasts markedly with the overwhelming dominance of red brick in the vicinity. The most notable changes would occur to the left hand part of the house that would be most noticeable when being seen from the frontage.
12. Although the proposed gable features are somewhat traditional in their design, the raising of the eaves, ridgeline and double gables would ensure that the existing bungalow becomes more dominant within the streetscene. This would not perhaps be such an issue were it not for the proposed render material to

¹ 3-5 Cedar Avenue

continue upwards on such elements. As a result, the bungalow would become more dominant and would begin to erode the consistency and homogeneity of the CA.

13. In terms of the impact upon The Narrows, I saw on my site visit that the appeal site is, just about, visible in wintertime from the footpath here. However, the site is raised higher than the base of the footpath primarily due to the age of the path and the fact that it appears sunken. As such the enclosure that The Narrows experiences in this location is natural and a symptom of its age. Accordingly, I cannot see how the proposed scheme would significantly affect the character or experience of this lane, or if it would it would be incredibly fleeting.
14. Ultimately, I find no harm to The Narrows but I do consider that the increase in the render material, combined with its use upon two gable features, would cause less than substantial harm to the lower end of the scale to the character and appearance of the CA, especially when viewed from the front. Although I understand the Appellant's reluctance to use a different material other than render, I consider that this could be the only way to mitigate the harm that I have identified.
15. On balance, the increase in the use of render upon what is already a prominent building within this part of the CA would result in this scheme eroding the generally consistent character of the historic environment here. As such the scheme would be in conflict with Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Policy R1 of the Trafford Core Strategy aswell as guidance contained within the Councils Supplementary Planning Documents SPD5.5 and SPD5.5a and the guidance contained within The Downs Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Conclusion

16. As such, for the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR