



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2025 by A Khan BSc (Hons) MA MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/24/3356596

Perdu, 9 St Margarets Road, Altrincham, Trafford WA14 2AR

- 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 Mr Christopher Oakes against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 113916/HHA/24.
 - The development proposed is above ground extension to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeal site is situated in the Devisdale Conservation Area (DCA) and within the settings of listed buildings. I shall therefore have special regard to Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Devisdale Conservation Area (DCA) and the significance of Limehurst, a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance of the DCA and significance of Limehurst

5. The DCA is an attractive, predominantly residential area which, as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century with houses on a grand scale, set in large plots at a low density with magnificent gardens, sweeping drives and coach houses. The development of this area was prompted by the advent of the railway to nearby Altrincham and Hale, as well as the prosperity of Manchester and desire to move to healthier surroundings for those who could afford to. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the special interest of the DCA lies in its fine collection of Victorian and Edwardian properties set within spacious and verdant grounds, reflecting the historic development of this affluent area.

6. The CAA identifies the appeal site as within Character Zone A, which characterises the residential area by its historic openness, tree-lined roads and Victorian- and Edwardian-era architectural styles. This is coupled by the area's gradients and associated views provided by the gentle west slope descending towards Dunham Massey. Dwellings are of a large scale, two- or three-storeys, situated within spacious plots, off centre and set back far from the road, often towards the back of the plot. There are boundary treatments of low stone walls and planting above, as well as mature trees in the gardens. This partially conceals many of the properties from public view, providing a sense of privacy.
7. The appeal site comprises a largely underground dwelling, with a modest, above ground structure, set within a relatively small plot. The modest scale of the above ground element and the landscaping scheme associated with the existing dwelling ensures that the site as developed preserves to a large extent the significance of Character Zone A and the DCA as a whole.
8. The site historically formed part of the spacious grounds of Limehurst, a large Victorian villa which was subsequently converted into apartments. It is an impressive building that reflects the age, style, materials and form of the DCA. This, as well as its siting within spacious, landscaped grounds, illustrates the historic development of the settlement in which it stands. For these reasons, it is identified by the CAA as a positive contributor to the DCA, and I agree that it should be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.
9. The proposed extension would represent a significant addition to the existing above ground element, and within an area predominantly characterised by its openness. The sprawling nature of the development would permanently alter the openness of the appeal site, and unduly stand out as an alien feature within an area which had previously been carefully and sensitively landscaped, and which presently preserves the significance of the DCA and the setting of Limehurst.
10. By reason of its siting, scale, massing and design, including its choice of materials, the appeal scheme would appear at odds with the prevailing pattern of development which characterises the DCA. The erosion of this otherwise predominantly open setting would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the DCA as a whole.
11. Moreover, the appeal scheme would intrude into the setting of Limehurst which is predominantly defined by its spacious, landscaped grounds. Although the proposal is a low level structure above ground, the scale and siting of the extension would make it a prominent and incongruous feature, thereby dominating the open green space and undermining the site's historic relationship with Limehurst, to the detriment of its significance as a non-designated heritage asset. The design approach and choice of contemporary materials would also harmfully contrast with the traditional palette which prevails in the site's surroundings, thus compounding the incongruous nature of the development.
12. The harm would be exacerbated by the removal of the existing Yew hedge, which would be required to enable the construction of the proposed development and, in doing so, would increase its visibility within the street scene. Although the hedge would be replanted in the same location on completion of the construction works, it would likely take a considerable length of time before it could provide some form of screening, and in the meantime would cause persistent harm.

13. Furthermore, the use of vegetation for screening would not be sufficient to mitigate the impact of the proposed development given the harm I have identified, and also because there is always the possibility of disease or removal of hedging in the longer term. Even with the boundary walls and mature vegetation, the extension would be visible notably from the neighbouring apartments of Limehurst and the street scene.
14. The CAA and Conservation Area Management Plan refer to a number of modern developments which have taken place within the DCA, as well as the pressure for new development that it carries on facing today. In that respect, the appellant has drawn my attention to an approved scheme for a new dwelling at Hill Carr¹ as justification for the proposed scheme. However, this development is different to the appeal scheme, notably due to the significant changes in level between Hill Carr and the approved structure.
15. In contrast, the proposed development would extend the size of the above ground element significantly, which would detract from the historical context and openness of the DCA, and significance of Limehurst. Therefore, and having regard to the available evidence, the circumstances of this particular scheme do not represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, and the Hill Carr scheme is afforded limited weight in my consideration of this appeal.
16. Consequently, the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the DCA, and the significance of Limehurst as a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal would be contrary to Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 – 2039 [Adopted 21 March 2024], Policy R1 of Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy [Adopted January 2012] and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
17. Among other things, these seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment with development that contributes to the significance of heritage assets and respect the character of the locality. Furthermore, the proposal would be contrary to the aims of the Devisdale Conservation Area Appraisal (SPD 5.10) and Conservation Area Management Plan (SPD 5.10a) [July 2016].

Heritage balance

18. The proposal would fail to preserve the significance of the DCA as a designated heritage asset and that of Limehurst as a non-designated heritage asset, to which I ascribe considerable importance and weight. The development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the DCA. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
19. The proposal would provide additional, above ground residential accommodation and increased passive surveillance. It would also make a modest contribution to the economy by providing jobs opportunities within the construction industry. These considerations are afforded limited weight.

¹ Local Planning Authority Ref 97665/FUL/19

20. Furthermore, it is argued that the appeal scheme would improve the prospects of selling the appeal property and/or bringing it into use, thus contributing to housing supply. However, little evidence has been presented to demonstrate whether the property has been marketed at a realistic price. Additionally, the appellant's submissions do not enable meaningful comparisons to be made between the appeal dwelling and 13 Hill Top, which is described as a property of similar standing. This limits the weight which can be ascribed to these considerations. Overall, there are no presented public benefits which would outweigh the harm I have identified.

Other Matters

21. The appeal site lies within the settings of the Grade II listed Altrincham and Dunham Massey War Memorial and the Grade II* listed Church of Saint Margaret. Based on my observations and the available evidence, the special interest of the listed War Memorial comes predominantly from its historical significance and highly decorative features, whilst the special interest of the listed Church from its ornate architectural detailing. No concerns have been raised by the Council regarding the effect of the appeal scheme upon the special interest of the War Memorial and Church of Saint Margaret, including their settings. The appeal site lies some distance away from these designated heritage assets and overall, I am satisfied that the scheme would preserve their special interest.

Conclusion and Recommendation

22. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Khan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

23. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR