



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2026

by MG Garrard LLB (Hons), PGDip.LP, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th June 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/26/3377485

50 Barlow Road, Manchester, M19 3DA

- 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 Ishfaq Hussain against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 143503/FO/2025.
 - The development proposed is convert and upgrade the basement to be suitable for habitation and change of use of the basement to a self contained flat. Alteration to existing rear roof for installation of a roof dormer.
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Decisions

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposal to convert and upgrade the basement to be suitable for habitation and change of use of the basement to a self contained flat.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the alteration to existing rear roof for installation of a roof dormer at 50 Barlow Road, Manchester, M19 3DA and planning permission is granted for the alteration to existing rear roof for installation of a roof dormer in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 143503/FO/2025, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers: site location plan; proposed rear and side elevations 4200 REV B.
 - 3) Notwithstanding condition 2, no external facing materials shall be installed on the dormer hereby permitted until details/samples of those materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matter

3. The appellant has included amended plans as part of their appeal submission showing a revised location for bin storage and a change to the proposed rear dormer. The Council has had the opportunity to comment on the plans. They do not fundamentally alter the proposed development, so I have considered them. I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my approach.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to internal and external space; and existing occupiers with particular regard to noise and disturbance; and
 - the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

5. The proposed basement flat would provide approximately 36.8 square metres of floor space. The Manchester Residential Quality Guidance 2016 adopts the nationally described space standard and advises that a one-bedroom one-person dwelling should provide 39 square metres of internal floorspace, or 37 square metres where a shower room is provided instead of a bathroom.
6. The flat would provide a bedroom, lounge, and bathroom, with no separate kitchen, and the limited floorspace would need to accommodate all day-to-day domestic activities, including sitting, eating, food preparation, storage and the washing and drying of clothes. Therefore, even though the shortfall against the standard is limited, the proposal would be likely to result in a cramped, and poor quality living environment.
7. The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (adopted April 2007) (Development SPD) seeks to ensure that spaces are well lit and ventilated naturally. Natural daylight would come from a single window in the bedroom, and one in the lounge together with glazing in the front entrance door. All are below ground level and therefore daylight to the proposed flat would also be limited creating a gloomy living space.
8. Furthermore, the Development SPD expects new development to provide on-site amenity space. Although 50 Barlow Road has a rear yard, the submitted plans show no access to it from the proposed basement flat and, in any event, it serves the existing occupiers of the host property rather than providing separate private amenity space for future occupiers of the flat.
9. The proposed basement flat would introduce one additional, small household at this location. It would have an independent pattern of comings and goings, but on a relatively busy street, the evidence does not show that a single additional household would materially increase activity, noise or disturbance, or result in an over-intensification of the site. Any additional parking demand arising from the proposal would be minimal which would not add to the general activity in the vicinity to a material degree.
10. Future occupiers would access the flat via a new basement entrance to the front passing a large ground-floor window. However, that window already directly fronts the street with limited privacy from passers-by. The proposed boundary treatment around the basement access would create a clearer separation and a buffer from street activity.

11. Thus, whilst the proposal would harm the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to internal and external space it would not harm the living conditions of existing occupiers with particular regard to noise and disturbance.
12. Even so, the proposal would fail to comply with saved policy DC5 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) with regard to the standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises and failure to provide adequate private outdoor amenity space. It would also conflict with the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11 July 2012) (Core Strategy), in respect of policy SP1 which indicates that development should make a positive contribution to the health, safety and well-being of residents; and policy DM1 which requires that all development should have regard to, amongst other matters, design for health and adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space. Conflict would also arise with policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2022-2039 (adopted 21 March 2024) (Joint DPD) in so far as it expects development to be functional and convenient, and comfortable and inviting. However, there would be no conflict with these policies having regard to the living conditions of existing occupiers.
13. In their decision notice the Council also referred to Core Strategy policy H5 which relates to housing in central Manchester, and Joint DPD policy JP-S1 which addresses climate change. It has not been explained how either relate to the appeal proposal, and therefore they do not assist my determination of this issue.

Character and appearance

14. 50 Barlow Road lies within a terrace formerly used as a small row of shops, as reflected in its fenestration. At this end of the terrace, the properties have simple, open frontages with no projections beyond the principal elevation, unlike the enclosed front yards found further along. The proposed boundary wall, excavated forecourt, steps to the basement entrance and front bin storage would introduce prominent, enclosed, and engineered development that would add visual clutter and disrupt the simple, open character of this part of the terrace.
15. Similar basement arrangements exist locally, but those grouped at the end of the terrace are contained in their location. Whereas the proposed wall, excavation, and steps, and bin storage, would appear isolated, incongruous, and visually intrusive.
16. The proposed dormer would be attached to the rear roof slope, above the existing two-storey outrigger. The dormer walls would be on the same plane as the walls of the existing house but would not run to the edge of the eaves. This would appreciably lessen its perceived bulk and appear as a subordinate roof addition.
17. Furthermore, the rear elevation is not readily visible from public viewpoints, being mainly experienced only from the rear alley which is accessed via locked gates. In that contained setting and noting the presence of similar rear dormers on nearby properties including at 44 Barlow Street, the proposed dormer would not appear visually incongruous. Some noticeable variation in materials would be introduced, but it would not draw attention to a degree that would cause material visual harm, and this could be ensured by controlling the final choice of materials by condition.
18. For the reasons given, in respect of the basement flat the proposal would not comply with policies in the Core Strategy, namely policy EN1 with regard to the

expectation for development to reinforce and enhance the local character; policy SP1 with regard to the requirement for development to make a positive contribution including by creating well designed places that enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built and natural environment and policy DM1 concerning impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development.

19. However, there would be no conflict with these policies in respect of the rear dormer and it would also comply with saved policy DC1 of the UDP which amongst other matters supports extensions to residential properties subject to criteria including that they are not excessively large or bulky, and they are not out of character with the style of development in the area. The proposed rear dormer would also accord with policy in the Framework which indicates that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Other Considerations

20. In the context of the proposed basement flat, I am mindful of policy in the Framework which seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes and provide an appropriate mix of housing types for the community, therefore adding a single small dwelling to the supply of housing attracts modest weight in favour of this aspect of the proposal. However, this material consideration does not outweigh the harm I have identified and conflict with the development plan read as a whole.

Conditions

21. I have reviewed the Council's suggested conditions having regard to the tests in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. I am imposing the standard timescale condition and conditions identifying the relevant plans to provide certainty, and for the approval of external materials to maintain the character and appearance of the area. It relates to external materials only, so the latter does not need to be a pre-commencement condition as suggested by the Council.
22. The Council suggested a condition to remove permitted development rights to use any part of the development for any purpose other than those in Class C3(a) of Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. However, the appeal succeeds only in respect of the proposed rear dormer, which would provide additional accommodation within the existing dwellinghouse and as such this condition would not be necessary.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed in relation to the proposed basement flat. However, the proposed rear dormer is clearly severable, and I am therefore able to issue a split decision and allow the appeal in so far as it relates to the rear dormer.
24. Therefore, the appeal is allowed in part and dismissed in part.

MG Garrard

INSPECTOR