



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 March 2013

by John Braithwaite BSc(Arch) BArch(Hons) RIBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 13 March 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/A/12/2188270

Land to the rear of Hazlemere, Pimlico Road, Clitheroe BB7 2AG

- 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 Sunderland Peacock and Associates against the decision of Ribbles Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2011/0991, dated 22 November 2011, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2012.
 - The development proposed is erection of three dwellings with associated vehicular access and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Clitheroe Conservation Area.
3. Hazlemere originated as a two-storey villa, built in the early years of the 20th century, but is now the home of an architectural practice. To the north of the building is a garden area that is mainly laid to lawn, to the south is a tarmac parking area, and to the west is a landscaped area in front of the main entrance into the building. The property has a west frontage to Pimlico Road, a north frontage to Causeway Croft, and a south frontage to Well Terrace. To the south-west of the property is the roundabout junction of Pimlico Road, Well Terrace and two other roads and to the east is a terrace of dwellings with frontages to Well Terrace and a retirement home known as Well Court.
4. The appeal site is the flat garden area of the property and its south boundary would be about 2.5 metres from the north elevation of Hazlemere. Along the east boundary of the appeal site is a mature wide beech hedge beyond which are the grounds of Well Court. Along the west boundary is a stone wall to the pavement alongside Pimlico Road and inside this wall are several mature coniferous and deciduous trees. Along the north boundary is a fence and several mature deciduous trees and beyond the fence is an area of mature planting alongside the pavement to Causeway Croft. Hazlemere is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit in the Clitheroe Conservation Area Appraisal.
5. The proposed development is for the erection of three terraced three-storey dwellings set back between about 6.8 and 7.6 metres from the north boundary to Causeway Croft and about 8.5 metres from the frontage to Pimlico Road. The front elevations of the dwellings would face towards Hazlemere across a wholly hard

landscaped parking and manoeuvring area for seven vehicles and the rear elevations would face towards Causeway Croft. The proposed development also includes the removal of a section of the stone boundary wall, the installation of a short driveway and a footway crossing of the pavement to Pimlico Road, and the removal of a number of boundary trees.

6. An arboricultural survey of June 2011 indicates that three trees within or close to the site are in poor condition and should be removed. There are good safety reasons, subject to approval from the Council, for these trees to be removed. Three other trees within the site on the Pimlico Road frontage were judged to be in C2 (poor) condition with only about 10 years left before they required removal. There is sufficient space along the road frontages of the site to plant replacement trees and these would, in time, provide no less visual amenity than the trees that they would replace. The removal of trees is not a reason to withhold planning permission for the proposed development.

7. There would be some loss of screening vegetation along the Pimlico Road frontage but a new hedge is proposed along this and other boundaries and the hedge would be a subject of a landscaping scheme that could be required by a planning condition. There are glimpses eastwards across the site from Pimlico Road of Pendle Hill, a significant topographical feature of the area. But there are glimpses of the hill from many locations in Clitheroe including along Causeway Croft and Well Terrace. Furthermore, glimpses of the hill would remain through the site over the site access and manoeuvring area. Neither of these factors are reasons to withhold planning permission for the proposed development.

8. The site is about 780 square metres, the proposed building would have a footprint of about 165 square metres, and hard landscaping would cover about 290 square metres. Only about 325 square metres of the site, about 42%, would remain soft landscaped. The proposed development would result in a significant loss of 'green space' visible from, and alongside, a main road in the town. Furthermore, apart from small areas of vegetation to the east of Hazlemere this building would be in a wholly hard landscaped plot. There would be only a hedge between a path on the north side of the building and the proposed parking area and this would be the only vegetation between the existing and proposed buildings.

9. Of greatest concern, however, is the design and scale of the proposed building. Its west elevation to Pimlico Road would be about one metre wider than the frontage of Hazlemere and, though the ridge of its roof would be no higher than that of the existing building, the roof would be a monopitch rather than the hipped roof of Hazlemere. Consequently, the proposed building, given also its greater depth, would have a greater presence in the streetscene than Hazlemere, which would therefore lose some of its townscape merit. The form and scale of the monopitch roof would be inappropriate in an area where roof planes are seldom dominant features of buildings.

10. The monopitch roof would be repeated on the east side of the proposed building and the central dwelling would have a gable roof with an east-west ridge. This juxtaposition of roof planes and forms would be a confusing feature of the building. Confused is also a criticism that can be aimed at the proposed windows of the building. Windows would be of random sizes and proportions and would be randomly located on the building's elevations. The fenestration lacks cohesion. This lack of cohesion in the design of the building would be exacerbated by the mainly timber boarded upper floors of the building being randomly divided into sections of vertical and horizontal boarding.

11. Other aspects of the design of the building are poorly conceived. First floor balconies to kitchen/dining rooms would be on the north side of the building and thus in shade for all but a few hours in the early morning and late evening during summer months. The rear garden of the middle dwelling would only be accessible through a ground floor bedroom. It was noted at the site visit that the east elevation of the building would be touching the beech hedge along the east boundary. Either there is no space for the metre wide pathway shown on the proposed site plan or a section of the hedge would have to be removed. A section of existing hedge would have to be removed to site a proposed cycle/bin store.

12. The proposed building is too large for the site. It would have a larger footprint than Hazlemere and, together with associated hard landscaping, would take up about 58% of the site. The design of the proposed building is poor and confused. The building would be out of place in its surroundings and would present a blank and uninteresting side elevation to Pimlico Road. The 'Pimlico Road Street Scene' on a street elevations application drawing illustrates this and the relationship of the proposed building to Hazlemere. With only hard landscaping between the two buildings, other than a hedge, the development would be unattractive and would undermine the townscape merit of Hazlemere.

13. For the aforementioned reasons the proposed development would have a significant adverse effect on, and would thus not preserve, the character and appearance of the Clitheroe Conservation Area. The proposal thus conflicts with saved policies G1 and ENV16 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan. The proposed dwellings would not be high quality design and would thus be contrary to a core planning principle in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other matters

14. On the south side of Well Terrace is a recently constructed school building that was designed by the Appellants. This building has an entirely different appearance to the appeal building and its surrounding are different also. In any event it is a well established planning principle that a development proposal should be determined on its individual merits.

John Braithwaite

Inspector