
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 October 2018

by Felicity Thompson BA(Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th November 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/18/3206077
10 Knowsley Road, Wilpshire, BB1 9PX

- 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 & Mrs Coupland against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2018/0263, dated 22 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 25 May 2018.
 - The development proposed is conversion and extensions to the former care home to create 5 dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the appeal was submitted the Government has published a new National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Both main parties were given an opportunity to comment on any relevant implications for the appeal, and any comments received have been taken into consideration.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect on highway safety with particular regard to the loss of the footway to the front of the site and visibility.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a relatively substantial, two storey, traditional building with some later additions. The property stands alone with car parking to one side and lawn to the other, surrounded by trees at the rear. Immediately in front of the building, is a low stone boundary wall, with a flagged section of pavement beyond, adjacent to the highway. The Council considers the building to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its age. The properties in the surrounding area vary in design and appearance, with bungalows located to the front and rear of the property. Generally the properties in the immediate area

are well spaced with large areas of landscaping surrounding them which gives the area an open and pleasant character.

5. The proposed extensions would be subservient in appearance and incorporate features which reflect those of the original building and in this regard would be straightforward. However, in order for additional car parking to be provided, the proposal would result in the loss of the porch on the front of the original building, along with the stone wall, pavement and areas of soft landscaping. Whilst it appears that the porch was a later addition and notwithstanding the proposed incorporation of the date stone into the main façade, it is an attractive feature and its removal would have an adverse effect on the appearance of the building. Furthermore, the loss of landscaping and existing boundary features, to enable large areas of hard surfacing to be formed for car parking, would have an unacceptable urbanising effect which would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area.
6. Consequently, for the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the design and heritage protection aims of Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley (the Local Plan) and the Framework.

Highway safety

7. There appears to be dispute between the parties about whether the footpath to the front of the property forms part of the adopted highway. Even if I were to accept the appellants' position, the proposal would result in the whole of the frontage being given over to hard surfacing for car parking, which would result in vehicles being parked in very close proximity to the highway. I consider that this is likely to result in pedestrians having to step into the highway to unload vehicles.
8. Given the absence of turning space on the site, the proposal would result in vehicles either reversing out into the highway or manoeuvring in the highway to reverse onto the site. The constrained nature of the spaces would make reversing out into the highway more difficult because parked vehicles would restrict visibility. Reversing into spaces would present risks associated with performing manoeuvres in the highway. Both scenarios would pose a risk to the safety of users of the highway.
9. At my site visit I had regard to the visibility at both junctions of Clifton Grove with the highway. Visibility from the access north of the appeal site is restricted to the north by the bridge and at the south access, visibility is restricted to the south by an existing boundary. In parking vehicles up to the highway edge, the proposal would result in visibility being restricted in both directions for drivers of vehicles emerging from Clifton Grove to the detriment of highway safety.
10. Furthermore, in order to provide adequate parking spaces, it appears that there would be limited room for the placing of bins on collection days. This could lead to bins being placed on the parking area or in the highway and both scenarios would have the potential to interfere with the flow of traffic in the highway, posing a risk to the safety of users of the highway.
11. I have had regard to the information about vehicle movements associated with the former use as a care home. However, notwithstanding this information the

proposal includes the loss of an existing footway to accommodate additional vehicle parking up to the highway. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would have a materially harmful effect on highway safety contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Local Plan.

Other matters

12. Whilst I understand the appellants' frustrations, the misgivings expressed about the pre-application advice from Lancashire County Council and the way the Council dealt with the application are separate from the planning merits of the proposed development and have no bearing on the outcome of this appeal.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Felicity Thompson

INSPECTOR