



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2023

by N Duff BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/22/3311533

Bank House, 1 Ribble Lane, Chatburn, Clitheroe, Lancs BB7 4AG

- 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 Daniel Evans against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2022/0589, dated 7 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as “to install a double driveway to the front of Bank House. This will be to the right hand side (as you are looking at the property). This planning application is to request a dropped curb at the front of the property.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the character or appearance of the Chatburn Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a prominent position within the Chatburn Conservation Area due to being on the corner of Ribble Lane and Old Road. The property has two frontages and immediately abuts the highway edge on the elevation facing Old Road and is set back by a very short distance on the elevation facing Ribble Lane. Historic cobbled paving exists along the Old Road frontage. The property is constructed from stone in the local vernacular, has historic buildings immediately opposite and a historic terrace of properties to the north beyond the side garden. The side garden extends along the Ribble Lane frontage which has a low traditional stone wall providing the boundary between the property and the highway. A bus stop is located immediately adjacent to the boundary wall at the front of the dwelling.
4. The Chatburn Conservation Area Appraisal (CCAA) recognises the settlement as being set in a hollow formed by Chatburn Brook and has mainly nineteenth century buildings along all roads into the village in the local vernacular style.
5. The significance of the Conservation Area is defined by the quality of the historic buildings, its rural surroundings and the contribution the use of traditional materials in the local vernacular makes to the character of the area. The appeal site is defined as a Building of Townscape Merit in the CCAA due to its condition with many traditional features retained. Due to its prominent position, the historic context in which it sits, its materials and design, the property and the low stone boundary wall to the front make a positive

- contribution to the conservation area. The existing side garden which consists of a mainly concrete area with some planting makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area.
6. In coming to my decision, I have had regard to the statutory test set out at Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
 7. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
 8. The proposed development would result in the loss of a significant stretch of the low boundary wall along the Ribble Lane frontage to accommodate a double width driveway and would also require the kerb to be dropped and the bus stop to be relocated further down Ribble Lane. The removal of a section of the stone wall would result in the loss of a substantial amount of historic fabric in traditional materials and design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The hard surfacing within the side garden would be removed and replaced with concrete block paving. The proposed use of the driveway would create a more suburban appearance by the appearance of parked cars within the curtilage which would erode the historic character of the area further and would harm the historic setting and character of the host property.
 9. Evidence has been provided by the appellant showing original plans for the boundary wall of what was originally the bank in 1928 before the appeal property became a dwelling, therefore the wall in its current form postdates the appeal property. However, the wall was in situ when the Chatburn Conservation Area was established in 1974. Therefore, its contribution to the historic character of the area is longstanding and its partial loss would harm the character of the area to its detriment. The appellant has stated that the stone would be reused elsewhere on the site, however I have no details of this before me, nor details of how or where the wall would be terminated, therefore this attracts limited weight in the overall planning balance.
 10. My attention has been drawn to examples of other driveways in the area, some of the examples show very narrow driveways abutted by traditional walls and others appear to provide access to groups of dwellings. I have no details of the age of the driveways, their planning history or whether the walls are original or if they have been altered over time to provide access. Therefore, based on the information provided I cannot be certain that they are directly comparable with the circumstances of the site before me.
 11. For the reasons set out, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Chatburn Conservation Area. The proposal therefore conflicts with Key Statement EN5 and policies DME4 and DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 - adopted 16 December 2014 (CS) which between them require development to be of a high quality design, to conserve the historic environment and their settings and support development that makes a positive contribution and conserves and enhances the character, appearance and significance of the area.

12. For the reasons mentioned, the proposal would also fail to accord with paragraph 130 of the Framework which requires developments to be sympathetic to local character and history.
13. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Chatburn Conservation Area and would lead to less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset. In accordance with Paragraph 202 of the Framework, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Whilst the scheme would provide additional off-road parking for the private occupiers of the dwelling, in order to create the driveway, two on-street car parking spaces would be lost so there would be no net gain in spaces overall. Further, a public benefit put forward is that the driveway will be made wider than needed and that the access gate opposite the shop on the other side of the road will be kept clear as a result of the proposal giving more manoeuvring space. Taken together the public benefits would be limited and would not outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to which I attach considerable importance and weight.
14. The appellant has stated in their evidence that the plan is to develop the property into a family home and to provide an additional driveway and garden for their young family. Whilst the ability to provide additional parking within the curtilage and reconfigure the garden is a practical solution for a family, this matter would be a private benefit and carried very limited weight in the overall planning balance.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would not accord with Key Statement EN5 or policies DME4 and DMG1 of the CS and the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. It also does not accord with the provisions of the Framework in relation to heritage assets. Thus, having had regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

N Duff

INSPECTOR