



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2023

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/23/3319209

52A Lowergate, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1AD

- 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 Ian Nicol against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2023/0023, dated 5 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension, rear dormer, and other alterations to an existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal involves a single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling. These alterations are considered acceptable to the Council, and I find no reason to disagree with this assessment.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Clitheroe Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. There is a statutory duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') makes it clear 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.
5. The appeal site comprises a modest two-storey, semi-detached dwelling of traditional construction, most probably dating from the 19th Century. Its front elevation is finished in coursed sandstone and overlooks a large mature garden area. The rear elevation is limewashed, with a small courtyard garden.
6. The property is set behind a large car park and is viewed in the context of the large buildings to the rear, which include Swan Courtyard, and the neighbouring Bowland Court. These buildings contribute to a variety in architectural form and appearance found within the area.

7. The appeal site lies within the Clitheroe Conservation Area (CCA) which covers much of the central historic core of the town. The Conservation Area Appraisal recognises that the settlement is a small rural market town with a notable 12th century castle and an attractive collection of 18th and 19th century buildings. The appeal site is located within, the 'historical core', which is recognised for its relatively intact medieval layout. Lowergate, runs parallel to Castle St, one of the town's main and most historic thoroughfares. The area of Lowergate retains some important buildings, but with its character dominated by the blank aspect of the car park, which adjoins the appeal site.
8. The significance of the conservation area, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is mainly derived from the quality of its historic buildings, the long-established historic townscape and the use of traditional materials. The appeal property and its neighbour have a modest, traditional form incorporating simple detailing and traditional materials. The historic proportions, form and layout of the property has for the most part been retained. The appeal site is also identified as a 'Building of Townscape Merit'.
9. Whilst the appeal site and its adjoining neighbour have both undergone some minor alterations, they retain a high degree of their original character and symmetry. The loft of the appeal property has already been converted, with the only visible change to its roof being the installation two rooflights, which represent a modest alteration to the original building.
10. By contrast, the introduction of a dormer extension would be a significant and dominant alteration to the property that would occupy the majority of the rear roof slope. Such a bulky addition would result in the introduction of a overly dominant feature that would unbalance the roof line of these semi-detached properties to the detriment of the character and appearance of the host building.
11. The visual impact of the dormer is minimised by virtue of its position to the rear elevation, and siting above the eaves and beneath the ridge line. I also acknowledge that the rear roof slope is not prominently sited. However, where it is visible, particularly from the steps from the car park leading to the town centre, it would appear as an incongruous feature within the surrounding roofscape.
12. My attention has been drawn to examples of roof alterations within the surrounding area, some of the examples provided relate to the formation of roof terraces, with glazed boundary treatments, and as such are not considered directly comparable to the appeal proposal. I observed very few examples of similar dormer extensions within the local area.
13. Therefore, by virtue of its scale, mass and proportions, the proposed development would not reflect the surrounding built form found within this part of the conservation area. Accordingly, it would detract from the overall appearance of the CCA.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CCA. It therefore conflicts with Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Amongst other things, these policies require development to be of high-quality design, be sympathetic in terms of their size, scale and materials make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of

place. Policy DME4 requires development to conserve and where appropriate enhance its character and appearance and those elements which contribute towards the significance of the conservation area.

15. The proposal would also conflict with Paragraphs 130 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seek to promote high quality design.
16. In failing to preserve the character and appearance of the CCA, I find that the appeal proposal would, in the words of the Framework, result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits. I note that the existing ceiling height fails to meet the minimum standards outlined in the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and there would be some benefits arising from increasing the ceiling height, thereby providing improved living accommodation for the occupiers of the dwelling. However, this is a private benefit and no public benefits have been put to me. Therefore, there are no public benefits in this instance that outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of the CCA.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given, the proposal would not accord with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR