

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2016

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/16/3160557

34 Beech Hill Road, Sheffield S10 2SB

- 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 Roger Greatrick against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02686/FUL, dated 5 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is Part demolition of existing boundary wall, erection of a new boundary wall to accommodate widening of the drive.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development as it appears on the appeal form as, whilst differing from that shown on the planning application form; best describes the proposed development to which this appeal relates. It is clear that both parties are content with this approach since the same description appears on the Council's decision notice. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Broomhill Conservation Area (BCA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site occupies a prominent position in the BCA, the boundary treatment concerned following the shape of the junction between Beech Hill Road and Watson Road. The walls are in a mix of stone sizes but share a common appearance with other boundary treatments of a variety of heights around the aforementioned junction as well as the wider BCA. The type of stone used is also typical of the majority of local buildings.
 5. Watson Road, and the street scene to which the proposed development would relate, has an enclosed and narrow feel, emphasised by the single width road surface. It is bounded either side by built development with side elevations and frontages of buildings directly abutting the back edge of the pavement. Frontage boundary treatments are generally intact and have defined entrances
-

for single vehicles and pedestrians as well as a very informal unmade track access to the north west of the appeal site. These features are defining characteristics of the Watson Road street scene and thus the BCA.

6. The proposed development would open up what is currently a single width vehicle access to the front of the garage, which is at the rear of Number 34 Beech Hill Road. Not only would this result in a much wider opening in the Watson Road Street scene but also the loss of a noticeable section of both the taller and dwarf stone boundary walls. The shortening of the projection of the dwarf section in particular would make the extent of the wall in its entirety appear obviously incomplete since it would stop short of the rearmost section of the dwelling.
7. I accept that the taller of the sections of wall that would be lost to the proposed development does appear to be somewhat newer and being rendered on one side does detract slightly from its more traditional appearance. However, it is complete and un-rendered when viewed from one side and forms the return section which encloses the road facing elevations of the existing dwelling. I am therefore mindful that despite the addition of the render, it still makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the street scene and the BCA.
8. These factors, when taken together, mean that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the BCA. I would consider this harm to be less than substantial and as per paragraph 134 of the Framework¹, it should be weighed against the public benefits.
9. In this case, I agree with the appellant that the increased area of hard standing would allow a vehicle to be parked in front of the garage and be clear from overhanging the pavement. This would allow pedestrians safer and freer access past the entrance to the garage without having to walk into the road which, from the strength of the evidence before me, gets very busy at key times of the day. In addition, the provision of a further off street parking space would be of benefit to residents of No 34, as well as free up on street parking space locally.
10. However, it is clear from where the garage was erected that the space to the front between its roller shutter door and the back edge of the pavement was never envisaged to be used as off street car parking. Furthermore, the local area has a scheme of controlled on street parking in place. So, whilst new off street space may free up on street space, this net benefit would be limited and in any event would not result in the reduction of vehicles from parking on street overall.
11. From this, it is clear that the overall public benefits of the proposed development would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the BCA by virtue of the loss of more than one key street scene feature. As a consequence, the proposed development would fail to accord with Policies BE15 and BE16 of the Sheffield UDP² and Policy CS74 of the Core Strategy³. These Policies seek to ensure that, amongst other things and along with section 12 of the Framework, new development should

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

² Sheffield City Council Unitary Development Plan 1998

³ Sheffield City Council Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy 2009

be of a high quality design and not harm heritage assets, Conservation Areas specifically, and that their character and appearance should be preserved or enhanced.

Other Matters

12. I accept that conservation is a process of managing change rather than precluding it as a matter of principle. Nevertheless, conservation equally relies on protecting from harm what is important and in managing any change, ensuring that the change itself does not cause harm.
13. I also accept that in making good sections of removed wall and the construction of any new elements, high quality materials and finishes would be put to use. This would not however make the development acceptable in light of the harm that I have found.

Conclusion

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR