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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

**by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F2360/W/16/3153101**

**118 Chapel Lane, Longton, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 5FB**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mrs and Miss Curran and Thompson against the decision of South Ribble Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 07/2015/1784/OUT, dated 18 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2016.
  - The development proposed is erection of detached house, with integral garage on site of existing double garage, and store (former stable) behind.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

4. The appeal site is a narrow piece of land on the southern side of Chapel Lane between Nos 118 and 120. It is currently occupied by a single storey garage and store that serve No 118. The properties on this side of Chapel Lane are generally large detached and semi-detached dwellings in spacious plots.
  5. The proposed dwelling would be located in a gap between Nos 118 and 120. The spacing between the properties in this location is generous, and the gap between Nos 118-120 is comparable to the gaps between Nos 116-118 and Nos 124-126. The proposal would interrupt this pattern of spacing, and would create a plot that would be significantly narrower than other plots in the vicinity. Given the prevailing pattern of spacing on this side of the road, and the width of the adjacent properties, the development would appear unduly cramped and shoehorned into the site.
  6. Whilst the properties along Chapel Lane are varied in style and size, those in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site are generally larger properties within spacious plots. The grain of development changes further to the east where semi-detached properties predominate. However, on the southern side of the
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road this change does not take place until some distance from the appeal property. Whilst there are nearer semi-detached properties on the opposite side of the road, these are in larger plots than the appeal proposal and are within a short row of similar properties.

7. The appellant states that the proposed dwelling would be comparable to other infill developments that have taken place in the area. However, no specific examples have been brought to my attention, and I am therefore unable to assess whether this is the case. In addition, whilst there would be no unacceptable harm to the privacy or living conditions of nearby properties, that has no bearing on the harm I have identified above.
8. The proposed dwelling would have a smaller footprint than the existing garage and store. However, this is a flat roofed single storey structure that is visually subordinate to the main house, and maintains the gap between Nos 118 and 120 above ground floor level.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012), and Policies B1 and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026 (2015). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
10. In coming to that view, I have had regard to the appellant's concerns in relation to what is seen as a subjective interpretation of policy by the Council. However, the effect of a development on the character and appearance of an area is always at least partly a matter of professional judgement.

### **Other Matter**

11. The proposed dwelling would not meet the definition of affordable housing set out at Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Conclusion**

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development. I have found that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area, and would therefore have a negative environmental effect. The social effect of the development would include the provision of a new dwelling in a relatively sustainable location, that would make a small contribution to supporting local facilities and services. There would also be a modest economic benefit generated through employment and economic activity during the construction process. However, these modest benefits would be outweighed by the environmental harm caused by the proposal. The development would therefore not constitute sustainable development as set out in the Framework.
13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Thomas Hatfield*

INSPECTOR