
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by Siobhan Watson BA(Hons) MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/16/3154040

3 Accrington Road, Whalley, BB7 9TD

- 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 Peter Street against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2016/0387, dated 21 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of stone boundary wall and creation of a 2-storey extension to accommodate ground floor retail space and a first floor one bedroom flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed building would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whalley Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site is a gap between two commercial/residential units within the Whalley Conservation Area which is characterised by stone buildings, small, local shops and traditional inns. No 1-3 Accrington Road, to which the proposed building would be attached, has been defined by the Council as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM). This BTM is a large 2-3 storey, stone, corner property with deeply recessed windows and doors with painted stone surrounds. The lower 2-storey element is the part of the building which would adjoin the proposed development.
 4. The proposed structure would have two full storeys and a tall roof which would accommodate a bed deck. Whilst the eaves at the front of the proposed building would align with those of No 3, the eaves at the rear would be higher and the pitches of the front and rear roof-slopes would not match each other. As a result the ridge of the roof would be substantially taller than that of the adjoining building. The mis-match between the new and existing eaves, roof heights and roof pitches would result in an unattractive and incongruous addition to the BTM.
 5. Furthermore, many of the surrounding shops and inns have traditional shopfronts with stall-risers and pilasters or masonry around the windows and these are an important characteristic of the conservation area. The butcher's
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next door is an example of such a format. Conversely, the proposed shopfront would be a large window which would wrap around the corner of the building giving the impression of the 1st floor floating above it. This design would be at odds with surrounding traditional shopfronts.

6. In addition, whilst the upper floor windows would line up with the other windows in Nos 1-3, they would lack glazing bars and the window wrapping around the corner would further exacerbate the "light-weight" appearance of the front façade. The generous use of glazing would be inharmonious amongst the surrounding solid and traditionally proportioned buildings. In summary, the proposed building would introduce a style that would be visually incompatible with, and would dilute, the character and appearance of the conservation area.
7. S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty upon me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The proposal would be incongruous with its surroundings but, as it would constitute a small part of the conservation area as a whole, it would cause less than substantial harm to the special interest and significance of the conservation area. In these circumstances paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would make a small addition to the local housing supply and it would make some contribution to the local economy and community by providing additional retail space. However, I do not consider that these public benefits would be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have found.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed building would fail to preserve let alone enhance the character and appearance of the Whalley Conservation Area. Consequently, I find conflict with Policies DMG1, EN5 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, 2014 which seek to ensure that development respects its context and protects heritage assets. It would also conflict with the key design principles of the Whalley Conservation Area Management Guidance which include that all new development should maintain the historic pattern of development and to reflect the proportion of solid to void found in the elevations of traditional buildings.
9. I have considered all other matters raised but nothing outweighs the harm I have found and the appeal is dismissed.

Siobhan Watson

INSPECTOR