
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/17/3171187

Westholme, Longsight Road, Copster Green, Lancashire, BB1 9EU

- 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 David Alston against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2016/1067, dated 9 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "demolition of existing dwelling and garage. Provide new detached dwelling with linked annex and garage".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow on the eastern side of Longsight Road that is set within a generous plot. It sits on sloping ground and is surrounded by detached properties. Along this section of Longsight Road, the majority of dwellings consist of larger bungalows.
4. The development proposes to replace the existing bungalow with a substantial detached dwelling that would be mainly 2 stories in height. This would be in a relatively prominent, elevated position fronting Longsight Road, which is a major through route. The appeal dwelling would be significantly larger than both the existing bungalow and other properties along this part of the road. In this regard, it would be over 30 metres wide and would occupy almost the full width of the plot. It would also have a considerable built footprint. The ridge height of the proposed dwelling would be significantly higher than the properties on either side and this would contribute to a disproportionate relationship with Holme Lee in particular. Whilst there are other 2 storey properties further along Longsight Road, these are significantly smaller than the proposed dwelling. In this regard, it would appear out of scale with the surrounding properties and would represent an overdevelopment of the plot.
5. In addition to its size and scale, the design of the property would also be out of keeping with the area. The front elevation would contain an excessive amount

of glazing, particularly on the left wing. The proposed front balcony would also be an unsympathetic feature. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') states that planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or stifle innovation, in this case, the design and scale of the property would be incongruous in the surrounding area. Whilst the building would be split into 3 sections to break up its mass, this measure would not significantly mitigate the impact of the development in my view.

6. The existing bungalow is unremarkable in appearance. However it is of a scale and design that is in keeping with the character of the area. In this regard, the development would not represent an improvement to the site's appearance.
7. Views of the appeal site from the north are restricted by hedges and boundary planting around the perimeter of Blue Trees. However, the proposed dwelling would still be clearly visible in the surrounding area, including in longer views from the south. It would have only a limited set back and would be in an elevated position relative to the road. It would therefore be prominent in the surrounding area in my view.
8. The area does not benefit from Conservation Area status, or any local character designation. However, that is not unusual and it does mean that the character of the area does not merit protection. Whilst nearby properties exhibit a degree of variation in style and design that does not justify a development with the shortcomings I have identified above.
9. My attention has been drawn to a recent appeal decision on a nearby site that also fronts Longsight Road (ref APP/T2350/A/14/2226295). However, the full details of that case, including the Council's objections to it, are not before me. In any case, that scheme proposed significantly smaller dwellings with a different relationship to Holme Lee. I have therefore come to my own view on the current appeal proposal.
10. The appellant has also highlighted recent approvals for an extension to Oaksmead (ref 3/2015/0771), and a replacement dwelling at Sunny View (ref 3/2013/0845). However, both of these developments are smaller than the appeal proposal, and are in less prominent locations. They also sit within a different context along Manor Road. They are therefore not directly comparable to the appeal development.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014). This policy seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that new development is sympathetic to its context in terms of size, scale, and design. It would also be at odds with the Framework which requires good design.

Other Matters

12. The proposed dwelling would be significantly closer to the boundary with Blue Trees than the existing property. However, Blue Trees is located on higher ground than the appeal site, and the part of the dwelling that would be closest to the boundary would be only single storey in height. The first floor windows in Blue Trees that would face the development serve rooms that also contain other large windows. These rooms would therefore not experience a harmful loss of light or outlook. In addition, the ground floor windows in Blue Trees'

southern elevation currently face a high conifer hedge, and any effect on these windows would therefore be limited.

13. The properties fronting Manor Road that back onto the appeal site would be some distance away from the rear of the new dwelling. A separation distance of at least 35 metres would be retained (according to the Planning Officer's Report), which would be sufficient to maintain the privacy of those properties. The distance from the rear of the new dwelling to the shared boundary would also be sufficient to protect the privacy of the garden areas. In addition, the properties fronting Manor Road are in an elevated position and there are a number of trees along the shared boundary. These factors would also serve to mitigate any impact associated with the development.
14. Any concerns regarding due process during the processing of the planning application fall outside of the remit of this decision.
15. The issue of impact on property values has also been raised. It is a well-founded principle that the planning system does not exist to protect private interests such as value of land or property.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR