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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2019 by Hannah Ellison MSc BSc (Hons)

**Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 3 September 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D2320/W/19/3225710**  
**40 Westhead Road, Croston, PR26 9RR**

- 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 Mark Gilson of Westhead Stores against the decision of Chorley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 18/01071/FUL, dated 13 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 28 January 2019.
  - The development proposed is the erection of single storey to existing shop.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No.40 Westhead Road and the wider street scene.

### Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a two-storey end-of-terrace property, with an area of hardstanding to the front. The building, understood to have been constructed in the C19 possibly as a shop, is used as a convenience store on the ground floor. This proposal seeks permission to erect a single storey front extension.
5. The appeal site is unique along the terrace as it is the only property in retail use and thus the ground floor does not have a residential appearance similar to adjacent dwellings. Nevertheless, the retail façade is proportionate to the original property.
6. The host terrace (Nos.40-58 Westhead Road) has a clearly defined building line, with a distinct lack of front extensions. Whilst there is a variety of boundary treatments and some difference between individual properties in terms of fenestration pattern and detailing, the lack of any projections to the front of the terrace give it a flat fronted appearance which contributes to its character and appearance. Some front gardens have been replaced with

- parking areas, but the space in front of each property is of a similar depth. This creates a strong sense of rhythm along the terrace.
7. The proposed extension would span almost the entire width of the property and would have a substantial projection into the area of hardstanding reducing the depth of the forecourt at odds with that of its neighbours and dominating the front elevation. Given its scale and bulk, and as the appeal site is highly visible when viewed from the west along the length of the terrace, the proposed extension would appear as an intrusive feature to the established building line, thus interrupting the rhythm and overall appearance of the terrace.
  8. The existing store has a traditional front window, albeit at the time of site visit it was covered in fascia panels. Nevertheless, despite the presence of the current fascia panels, which appear to be removeable, the outline of the window is still evident. I acknowledge that shop windows are no longer necessarily required to display goods for sale. However, whilst the proposed design includes an artistic graphic depicting the former appearance of the shop, which could be incorporated into the fabric of the building, such a solution would lack the architectural articulation of a window and moreover would not reflect the traditional appearance of the building or wider terrace. Additionally, the use of local materials, whilst appropriate, would not mitigate the harm caused by the lack of fenestration. As such, the proposed design of the extension would not reflect the character of the original property.
  9. Submitted photographs suggest the shop historically had a retracting canopy to the front, and similarities in terms of projection and height have been drawn between this and the proposed extension. However, the canopy would have been a temporary feature, typically removed after the store closed, and its lightweight design would not result in the same harmful effect in terms of scale and massing as the solid structure proposed.
  10. It is noted the former church located west of the host terrace is positioned forward of the building line. However, this is a stand-alone building, detached and of a different design and function to that of the terrace. Consequently, it is read separately rather than as a bookend. Thus, it does not impact on the established building line of the terrace. Additionally, the terrace to the east (Nos. 20-38) is also read separately as it is also distinctively separated.
  11. I note that at other locations in the village building lines may be less distinct. However, examples of individual buildings siting forward tend to be originally designed with an emphasised projection and are not therefore directly comparable with the appeal proposal.
  12. Reference has been made to a front extension at No.69 Station Road. Whilst this is also an end-of-terrace property, as I do not have all the details of this development or the circumstances which led to its approval before me, I cannot be sure it is comparable with the appeal proposal. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this is not necessarily a good example of development to follow. Moreover, the examples presented to me do not justify the appeal proposal.
  13. Consequently, taking all the above into consideration, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of No.40 Westhead Road and the wider street scene. Thus, it would conflict with Policy 17 of the Central Lancashire Adopted Core Strategy, Local Development Framework, July

2012 (CS) and Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, adopted 21 July 2015 (LP) which collectively seek to ensure new development takes into account the character and appearance of the local area, in terms of amongst other things, scale, design and massing. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly chapter 12, which seeks to ensure developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

14. Policy 17 of the CS and Policy BNE1 of the LP pre-date the Framework. However, their collective aims as noted above echo that of paragraph 130 of the Framework which states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. As such, policies of the CS and LP are consistent with the Framework and are not therefore out of date.

### **Other Matters**

15. I acknowledge that increasing the floorspace of the premises would allow an increase in the range of goods to be sold. However, whilst the proposed increase in floorspace may be required to improve the viability of the business, no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the business is currently unviable. This limits the weight I can give the matter as a benefit of the scheme.
16. I acknowledge that increasing the range of goods may be of benefit to the community although there are no details of the goods on offer in the shop, or elsewhere in the village currently before me. Given the limited increase in floorspace any benefit in this regard is also likely to be limited. Whilst I acknowledge that there may be no other opportunity to increase the floorspace, the benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

17. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

*Hannah Ellison*

Appeals Planning Officer

### **Inspector's Decision**

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*Susan Ashworth*

INSPECTOR