



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2019

by J Moss BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/W/19/3227934

Units 1-4 Railway Wharf, Station Road, Wrington BS40 5LL

- 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 Prewett of Prestige Property Development Limited against the decision of North Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 18/P/5198/FUL, dated 20 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 10 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'creation of one additional off-street parking space'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application forms submitted with the appeal documents describe the development as the creation of two additional off-street parking spaces, whereas the Council's decision notice refers to the creation of only one additional off-street space. The plans provided are consistent with the proposed development referred to in the decision notice. I have, therefore, considered the appeal on the basis of the creation of one additional off-street parking space.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are as follows:
 - the effect of the proposed development on highway safety; and
 - whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wrington Conservation Area.

Reasons

Highway Safety

4. The proposed parking space would occupy a small area on the corner of the junction of Westward Close and Station Road, adjacent to a row of existing parking spaces along Westward Close. These parking spaces are associated with the Station Road units. Station Road is one of the main roads through Wrington, whilst Westward Close is a cul-de-sac providing access to the existing parking spaces within the appeal site, as well as a dental practice, several dwellings and agricultural land beyond.

5. The proposed parking space would not align with the adjacent row of parking spaces (that are at a right angle to Westward Close), but would be at an angle of around 45° with the Close. The proposed parking space is close to the give way junction of Westward Close with Station Road.
6. As there is no turning head, drivers using the parking space would either reverse into or out of the space; both of which would involve manoeuvring within the carriageway. In this regard the swept path details that have been provided demonstrate that a Standard Design Vehicle can enter the parking space and reverse out of the parking space into Westward Close whilst allowing another vehicle to pass on the Close. However, such manoeuvring would be difficult due to the angle of the space and would involve the movement of vehicles in very close proximity to each other. Accordingly, it is likely that vehicles would use most of the carriageway width on Westward Close to manoeuvre into and/or out of the proposed parking space.
7. In terms of the likely incidents of conflict occurring as a result of vehicles manoeuvring on Westward Close, I note that a traffic flow survey has not been provided. Nevertheless, whilst Westward Close is a cul-de-sac serving a small number of dwellings, the Close is also used to access a dental practice, the existing parking spaces, the rear of the Station Road units and the agricultural land beyond. Vehicle and pedestrian movements in Westward Close are not, therefore, likely to be as low as one would expect on a cul-de-sac serving a small number of residential properties only.
8. Vehicle speeds on Westward Close are likely to be low. However, the visibility that drivers would have of vehicles and pedestrians on Westward Close when reversing out of the proposed parking space would be obstructed by vehicles parked in the existing, adjoining parking spaces. Accordingly, even with slow traffic speeds, there is a high risk of conflict between motorists using the proposed parking space and vehicles and pedestrians on Westward Close. This conflict would be within close proximity to the give way junction, at a point where other vehicles would be manoeuvring into and out of Westward Close and where pedestrians would be crossing. The addition of the proposed parking space in this location would, therefore, harmfully prejudice highway safety. A point supported by the Highway Engineer.
9. There is a lack of any records of accidents within the vicinity of the appeal site, but this does not change my conclusions with regard to the likelihood of harm to highway safety that would result from the proposed development.
10. The development would not, therefore, accord with policy DM4 of the North Somerset Council Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1) Adopted July 2016 (the NSSPP), which does not permit development that would prejudice highway safety.

Character and Appearance

11. The appeal site is within the Wrington Conservation Area. Within the vicinity of the appeal site the character of the area is that of a historic rural village. There is more modern development, including the dwellings on Westward Close, within the vicinity of the appeal site, but this is outside the boundary of the conservation area. Although on the whole properties on Station Road near the appeal site are positioned close to the highway, sympathetic hard and soft landscaping is prevalent in the open front gardens and at the corners of

junctions near the site. This landscaping makes a positive contribution to both the character and appearance of the surrounding area and, therefore, the significance of the conservation area in this locality.

12. At the time of my site visit there was no vegetation present on the corner site; it was mainly covered in a gravel surface and there was a low stone wall supporting a small raised area.
13. Whilst former soft landscaping at the corner of the appeal site may have recently been removed, the low stone wall and gravel surface are not incongruous within the setting and, to a degree, assist in retaining the prevalence of the hard and soft landscaped areas within the vicinity of the appeal site, as described above. Accordingly, the current appearance of the appeal site makes a marginally positive contribution to the character and appearance of the wider area.
14. The proposed parking space would remove the current hard landscaping and would make the site more functional in its appearance. It is an inevitable consequence that vehicles would park within it. Whilst this would be viewed against the context of the row of existing parking spaces, the proposed parking would dominate this prominent corner location, to the detriment of the character of the wider area. Thus, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. In this regard the development would be contrary to policies CS5 and CS12 of the North Somerset Core Strategy January 2017 and policies DM3 and DM32 of the NSSPP that seek, amongst other matters, to protect and enhance the existing local character.

Other Matters

15. Having regard to the findings above, I find the harm caused to the Wrington Conservation Area would be less than substantial. In these circumstances, paragraph 196 of The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), as a material consideration, makes it clear that where less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset would occur then this has to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
16. The development would modestly free up an on-street parking space in the area as a public benefit. This would, however, be of limited weight against the great weight that should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, as required by paragraph 193 of the Framework. Accordingly, I find that the harm that would occur to the Wrington Conservation Area in the vicinity of the appeal site outweighs the benefit suggested above.

Conclusions

17. The proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

J Moss

INSPECTOR