



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 28 September 2021

by James Blackwell LLB (Hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/21/3278808

Concord, High Street, Broughton SO20 8AD

- 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 Graham Sweetman against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01326/FULLS, dated 4 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since determination of the planning application, the 2019 iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) has been superseded. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the changes. I have therefore determined this appeal with regard to the current version, published in July 2021.
3. As the appeal site is within a conservation area and in close proximity to a listed building, as per sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area and the desirability of preserving the settings of the listed building.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of a nearby listed building;
 - whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on highway safety with regard to parking provision.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling located on the western side of High Street, which runs through the centre of Broughton. Notwithstanding the small garden to the front of the property, the frontage of the dwelling sits close to the road, which reflects the siting of other properties along the High Street. This means its visual impact is felt acutely when approaching from both directions. The main frontage of the dwelling is consistent with its adjoining neighbouring property in terms of design, alignment, pitched roof and fenestration arrangement. These common features give the two dwellings a strong degree of symmetry which contributes positively to the street scene.
6. The appeal dwelling currently has a staggered side extension along its southern elevation, which accommodates a utility room to the front and a wider kitchen to the rear. Given the existing extension is single storey only and is stepped back from the principal frontage, it appears inferior and subservient to the main dwelling, and therefore does not detract from the symmetry shared between the appeal dwelling and its adjoining neighbouring property.
7. The proposed development would introduce a second storey above the existing side extension. The bulk of the extension would align flush with the roof, as well as the front and rear elevations of the dwelling. However, part of the extension to the rear would sit slightly lower than the main roof pitch, thereby creating a stepped appearance which would be visible along the High Street. This design means that the dwelling's frontage would be much larger than the adjoining neighbour. It would therefore disrupt the strong degree of symmetry shared between the two properties, thereby appearing very dominant in the street scene.
8. The windows proposed at first and second floor would also be much narrower than those along the existing frontages of the two dwellings, and would therefore appear incongruous with the current fenestration arrangement. Again, this would lead to significant disparity between the two dwellings. Moreover, as the current ground floor extension is stepped back from the principal frontage, the new second storey would leave an overhang adjacent to the front door of the appeal property, which would upset the coherent front alignment of the pair of dwellings. This would further exacerbate the incongruity between the dwellings, which would be harmful to the street scene.
9. The appeal dwelling is located adjacent to Wells House, a grade II listed building, which is sited near to the side elevation of the property where the High Street meets the junction of Plough Gardens. Wells House comprises a series of timber arches which sit atop a low brick wall, which are enclosed by a tiled gabled roof. The historical nature of the listed building is commensurate with the prevailing character of other buildings along the High Street.
10. As the built form immediately surrounding Wells House is relatively low level, it benefits from a degree of prominence along the High Street, which is amplified by its open corner location. As one of the closest elements of built form to Wells House, the existing single storey side extension to the appeal dwelling helps facilitate this prominence. The proposed development would introduce a second storey, which would be much higher than Wells House. Given its close proximity, the additional storey would detract from the spaciousness around

the listed building, which is attributed to the low-level built form which immediately surrounds it. This loss of spaciousness would detract from its prominence, which would be particularly apparent when approaching Wells House from a southerly direction. As a result, the development would harm the setting of the listed building, which I consider would be less than substantial.

11. For these reasons, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would also cause less than substantial harm to the setting of Wells House, and there are no public benefits arising from the development that would outweigh this harm. The development would therefore conflict with Policies E1 and E2 of the Council's Local Plan (2011 – 2029) (adopted 2016) ("Local Plan"), which require new development to respect and complement the character of an area in terms of layout, appearance, scale, materials and style. The development would also conflict with Policy E9 of the Local Plan, which only permits development which would affect the setting of a heritage asset where it would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the asset's significance or prominence. Finally, the development would conflict with the overarching objectives of the Framework, which places a great emphasis on the preservation of the historic environment.

Conservation Area

12. The appeal property is located within the Broughton Conservation Area ("CA"). The character appraisal for the CA identifies various discrete areas within the CA, and includes a summary of the distinguishing features for each. The appeal property is sited within "*the High Street, south to the Church*" area, which is specifically recognised for its high concentration of listed buildings, which make a valuable contribution to the historic nature of this section of the village. On this basis, any development which harms the listed buildings within this area (or their setting) would invariably harm the special character of the CA as well.
13. As identified above, the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to Wells House, a grade II listed building sited in a prominent location on the High Street. As a result of this harm, it follows that the development would fail to preserve or enhance the Broughton Conservation Area. As such, the development would conflict with Policies E1, E2 and E9 of the Local Plan, which require new development to integrate properly with the character of the area, and to make a positive contribution to sustaining heritage assets within the Borough.

Highway Safety

14. The proposed development would introduce a fourth bedroom to the appeal dwelling. As per the provisions of Annex G of the Council's Local Plan, this necessitates a requirement of 3 useable parking spaces to serve the dwelling.
15. As per Policy T2 of the Local Plan, to be deemed useable, parking spaces need to measure at least 2.4m by 4.8m. The proposed parking space along the western side of the driveway measures approximately 4.6m in length, falling short of the space requirement. (I note that the plans also show a low walled planter to the front of the garage within this space, so the useable parking area is in fact smaller). As per the prescribed space standards, this would not constitute a useable parking space. My observations during my site visit reflected this conclusion, as it was difficult to envisage two cars being parked within the same driveway (unless both were very small).

16. Where parking cannot be properly accommodated on site, this could result in overspill parking onto the highway, most likely along Plough Gardens. This is a narrow road, which means any on-street parking could impede visibility and lead to difficulties with manoeuvring, both of which would be to the detriment of highway safety.
17. On this basis, the development would fail to provide adequate parking provision and therefore risks harm to highway safety. As set out above, Policy T2 and Annex G of the Local Plan require 3 useable parking spaces (at the prescribed space standards) to be delivered in conjunction with a 4-bedroom dwelling.

Other Matters

18. Whilst I note the appellant's comments regarding the pre-application advice which was previously sought in connection with the proposed development, such advice is not determinative as to the acceptability of a proposal, and therefore cannot carry weight in my decision.

Conclusion

19. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

James Blackwell

INSPECTOR