



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2021

by Nigel Harrison BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/21/3277446

2 Stephen Drive, Grenoside, Sheffield, S35 8QY

- 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 Eric Brookes against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/01018/FUL dated 7 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is a detached garage constructed over an existing hardstanding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area bearing in mind the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the adjacent Grenoside Conservation Area.
 - ii) The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance - Setting of Conservation Area

3. The proposed garage would occupy much of the existing driveway/parking space and be positioned well forward of the building lines of both the host dwelling and the neighbouring property fronting Stephen Lane. Due to the significant change in ground levels, the garage would appear particularly prominent in the streetscene on Stephen Lane and Stephen Drive and would dominate the immediate surroundings of the road junction.
4. Most of the area in the vicinity of the site is typically suburban in character and exhibits no strong prevailing character or especially local distinctiveness. However, the site is located immediately adjacent to the Grenoside Conservation Area (CA) which lies mostly on the northern side of Stephen Lane but also incorporates the older traditional stone buildings fronting Stephen Drive opposite the site.
5. The significance of the CA derives from the layout and typical upland character of the former hillside hamlet. It still contains many vernacular stone-built dwellings, together with Victorian and Edwardian dwellings and more modern

infill residential development. The *Conservation Area Appraisal* identifies many 'buildings of townscape merit', several being grouped around the road junction adjacent to the appeal site. The significance of a CA is dependent upon how it is experienced and how it would be affected by development outside it. Under such circumstances proposals must be judged according to their effect on the CA as a whole.

6. I find that the proposal would result in a visually obtrusive form of development which fails to respond positively to the context of the area. The garage would be highly prominent and dominant in this location. It would thus detract from the appearance and setting of the CA and thus be harmful to its significance.
7. Paragraphs 199-200 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) say when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to or loss of the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
8. In this case I consider the harm to the CA would be less than substantial, but nevertheless this attracts considerable importance and weight. In these circumstances Framework paragraph 202 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
9. Whilst it would no doubt be beneficial to the appellant to secure garage parking, this is a private benefit, and I can identify no public benefits to outweigh the harm that would be caused. Given this, I conclude on this issue would be harmful to the character and appearance of the local area and would fail to preserve or enhance the appearance and setting of the adjacent CA. It conflicts with policies H14, BE5 and BE16 of the *Sheffield Unitary Development Plan* (UDP), adopted 1998, which amongst other things seek to secure new buildings that are well designed and in scale with their surroundings. Policy BE16 says permission will only be granted for proposals which would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a CA, and explains that these principles will also be a material consideration in proposals which would affect the setting of a CA. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan.

Highway Safety

10. The proposed garage would be angled in relation to Stephen Drive and would face towards the main road junction, with limited space in front of it to manoeuvre a vehicle clear of the public highway.
11. The Local Planning Authority says the garage would be harmful to highway safety because of its proximity to the highway and road junction, poor visibility southwards for drivers leaving the garage, and the likelihood of drivers waiting to enter the garage causing an obstruction. However, the driveway is already used for parking, and whilst the garage would hinder visibility and add to the difficulty of manoeuvring, I consider this would not be to a degree that would have a materially harmful effect on highway safety. As such, I find no conflict with UDP Policy H14 (d) which requires proposals to provide safe access to the highway network and appropriate off-street parking.

Other Matters

12. I viewed the three locations where the appellant says garages have been built forward of the associated dwelling, either adjacent to or within the CA. However, their detailed siting and design is clearly distinguishable from that of the appeal proposal, and the presence of these other garages elsewhere in Grenoside, (some of which may pre-date the designation of the CA), does not create a precedent for approval of the appeal proposal. In any event, each application and appeal falls to be determined on its own merits.
13. The appellant says conditions could be imposed to overcome some of the Council's concerns. These include changing the roof to a flat roof, reducing the roof pitch angle, changing the roof form from gabled to hipped, and inserting a side window. However, these are alternative designs rather than something which could be reasonably be covered by conditions and would markedly alter the nature of the proposal. The appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and it is important that what is before me is essentially what was considered by the Local Planning Authority, and on which interested people's views were sought.

Conclusion

14. I have concluded that no significant harm would be caused to highway safety. However, this does not outweigh the substantial harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the locality and the appearance and setting of the Conservation Area. This amounts to a significant, substantial, and overriding objection which must be decisive.
15. As such, the proposal would conflict with the policies in the development plan and the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including representations both in support of and objecting to the proposal, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nigel Harrison

INSPECTOR