



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 April 2022

by Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20TH April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/22/3293007

The Old Police Station, 13 Accrington Road, Whalley, BB7 9TD

- 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 and Mrs Joe Hancock against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref Application 3/2021/0928, dated 7 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is proposed creation of car port to the rear of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The host property is variously described as the Old Police House or Old Police Station. I have taken the description of the development from the application form and use the term Old Police Station.
3. Following clarification with the Local Planning Authority, and for the avoidance of doubt, the appeal site lies within the Whalley Conservation Area.
4. In the interests of fairness, the appellant was given the opportunity to respond to this clarification. However, as the Council had refused the application on the basis of its impact on the surrounding Conservation Area, my determination of the appeal with reference to the appeal property falling within the Conservation Area should not come as a surprise. Consequently, the appellant is not prejudiced by my determining the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

5. The main issues before me are the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, and on the character and appearance of the host property and the Whalley Conservation Area.

Reasons

Highway safety

6. The proposed development would provide a carport to enable two cars to be parked off the road, under shelter. The depth of the car port at around 4.10 metres would be substantially less than the Highway Authority's recommended length for a garage set out in its guidance at 6 metres. I am aware that a former domestic garage has been demolished on the site, and that cars already park on the area of setts and hardstanding. Nonetheless, the introduction of

the carport, would formalise the parking of vehicles on the site where I noted, at the time of my site visit, that the two cars parked on the pavement were overhanging the pavement.

7. Manor Road is predominantly residential, linking Vale House Close and Manor Fields to the busy Accrington Road. Given that the construction of the car port would include a central stone pier and wooden column, there would be less flexibility in the way in which cars could be parked on the site than at present. This would exacerbate the existing position in relation to the safety of pedestrians walking along the pavement, to Vale House, the adjacent shop, and the properties in Manor Fields. This would have an adverse effect on highway safety contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (CS) adopted in 2014, which requires that the implications of car parking be considered in decision making.

Character and appearance

8. The appeal site sits on the corner of Accrington and Manor Roads. Accrington Road is one of the main routes in and out of Whalley. The Whalley Conservation Area is diverse. It includes the ruins of the fourteenth century Whalley Abbey, St Mary's and All Saints' Church and the retail core of Whalley which is predominantly made up of small units within two and three storey rendered brick buildings with slate roofs, and older plain dressed stone buildings, including public houses such as the Dog Inn. There are also examples of relatively unaltered traditional stone terraces of housing with slate roofs. Further to the north, along King Street, there are examples of redbrick semi-detached properties some of which are in use as retail units. These have a mix of detailing including half timbers, rendering, hanging tiles and red rosemary tile roofing. In addition, there are significant nineteenth century civic buildings such as the Old Police Station which add to the variety of the Conservation Area and reflect its historic development.
9. The appeal site relates to an outbuilding of the former Police Station which is now a private home. Both the principal building, which is identified as a building of townscape merit, and the outbuilding are made of local limestone with a fine rosemary tile roof and are set back off the road. The use of the coloured tile, contrasts with the predominant robust, slate roofscape of the majority of the Conservation Area. Both buildings have a clear visual relationship with each other.
10. The outbuilding itself is of a simple design in contrast with the flamboyant former Police Station which faces Accrington Road. However, that should not be taken to undermine its importance to the Conservation Area. The original symmetry of the plain building is evident, albeit it has been altered by the introduction of a garage door. Nonetheless, the simple stone surrounds around the remaining window and central door reflect the vernacular architecture exhibited elsewhere, including at the nearby public houses. Moreover, the hipped roof design, which includes details such as bonnet tiles, and exposed rafter tails with simple guttering, replicates the treatment of the rafters and gutters at the former Police Station.
11. The proposed car port would be supported by oak piers which would extend from the existing garden wall, and the higher wall that projects from the outbuilding. The fibre glass roof of the proposed car port would rise up towards the pavement and would extend the built development to the edge of the

pavement. It would also require a central stone pier and oak column in the middle. Consequently, the proposed development would partially, but significantly obscure the roof and important detailing of the outbuilding, including the gutter and exposed rafters and introduce alien building materials. Moreover, given the relationship of the car port which would extend the width of the outbuilding and bring the built development directly to the edge of the pavement, the bulk of the development would appear as an incongruous intervention when viewed in the context of the relationship between the outbuilding and the former Police Station, the streetscape and the wider Conservation Area.

12. I note that the properties to the north of the site sit further forward than the former Police Station and outbuilding, nonetheless, my main focus is the impact on the character and appearance of the host building and the wider Conservation Area.
13. In the correct circumstances, sensitive modern design, can be accommodated within Conservation Areas. However, in this particular instance, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal before me would have a significantly adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
14. In coming to this conclusion, I have been referred to a similar canopy nearby at 10 Vale Houses Close, Whalley. However, I took the opportunity to visit the site and noted that the canopy was no longer there. Moreover, the property in question does not lie within the Conservation Area. Nonetheless, I did notice that there were some shelters attached to a nightclub on the other side of Accrington Road. However, I am not familiar with the particular circumstances of these structures and therefore give them little weight in my consideration of the particular merits of the appeal before me.
15. Consequently, for the reasons set out above the proposed development would be contrary to Policies DMG1, DMH5, and DME4 of the CS, which require that proposals be of a high standard, drawing on the local context, so that development can conserve and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These policies broadly remain consistent with the objectives of the Framework. In addition, I conclude that the proposed development would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host property and the Whalley Conservation Area.
16. Given the harm that I have identified above, I conclude that the appeal proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area. Therefore, I must weigh this harm against any potential public benefits of the proposal.
17. I am aware that the appellants wish to improve the visual appearance of the area to the front of the outbuilding and to restore a natural finish to the northern wall. However, there is no convincing reason why this could not be undertaken independently of the proposal before me, and therefore, I do not attribute this any weight in favour of the development. In addition, the ability to park vehicles under shelter is solely a private benefit.
18. In coming to this conclusion, I have noted the representation by Whalley Parish Council made in support of the proposal. Nonetheless, in sum, I do not consider that any public benefit has been put forward to outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have found to the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

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

Louise Nurser

INSPECTOR