



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2022

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22/04/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/21/3280928

Flat 1, 4 Bull Lane, High Wycombe HP11 2DL

- 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 H Gill against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref 20/08199/FUL, dated 27 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Access to new living flat roof with guarding including loft room and new windows'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The council has confirmed that it based its decision on the proposals shown on drawing no. 002. This has not been disputed and I have also based my own assessment on this drawing.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area including the nearby Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a two-storey mid-terraced building which contains a commercial unit at ground floor level and a residential unit above. The front elevation of the building faces onto Bull Lane, a narrow pedestrianised street. Due to the modest scale, traditional form and dull material palette of the host building, it has an understated presence in the street scene. Buildings facing the site on Bull Lane are situated within the CA. The street acts as a link between Frogmore and White Hart Lane which in turn link to Queens Square, all of which form part of the historic core of the CA. The significance of the CA derives from the irregular medieval street pattern and the tightly knit continuous building frontages amongst which there are examples of fine period architecture.
5. The rear of the appeal site backs on to a service yard which is not located within the CA. The service yard is mainly surrounded by the rear elevations of neighbouring commercial buildings of mixed scale and design including that of the substantial Travelodge Hotel. The main rear projection on the appeal

building has a subservient appearance relative to its host and due to its pitched roof design forms part of an overall cohesive design.

6. As a result of the proposal, the increased bulk and height of the rear projection would compete with the scale of the host building. Its flat roofed design would be significantly at odds with the building's main traditional pitched roof profile. The steel railings on the roof garden would exceed the height of the main ridge of the building and would add to the dominant and discordant appearance of the design. Any residential paraphernalia introduced on the roof area, as a consequence of its use as a garden, has the potential to have a cluttered appearance which would add to the incongruity of the design.
7. I acknowledge that due to the narrow nature of Bull Lane and the position of the proposals to the rear of the site amongst adjoining buildings, the lines of sight afforded would mean that the development would not be highly perceptible to passers-by on that street. In other views towards the site from within the CA, including from Frogmore, White Hart Lane and Queens Square, the development would be screened by surrounding buildings. Consequently, the significance of the CA would be preserved. For the same reasons, I am also satisfied that the settings of the Grade II listed building at No 2 Oxford Street as well as the non-designated heritage assets identified by the Council at Nos 7 – 10 Bull Lane and 11 – 15 Queen Street would not be harmed. Therefore, there would be no conflict with the conservation requirements of Policy DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment) of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) (the LP).
8. However, in public views from within the service yard and from the rear of neighbouring buildings, including from the many windows serving the Travelodge Hotel, the detracting elements of the design would be clearly evident. I accept that some of the surrounding development to the rear of adjoining buildings is of a more utilitarian appearance and includes some flat roofed elements. However, these factors do not obviate the need to achieve good design in this particular instance. Indeed, paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
9. Overall, I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In that regard, the proposal would conflict with the requirements for development to be of a high quality design and to respect the character and appearance of the existing property and surrounding area in Policies CP9 (Sense of Place), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality) and DM36 (Extensions and Alterations to Existing Dwellings) of the LP and the Framework.
10. The Council's decision also refers to its 'Householder Planning and Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2019)'. I have not been provided with a copy of this document and therefore have not identified conflict with it. In any case, this does not diminish the identified conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR