



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2022

by David Jones BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/22/3295178

32 Grappenhall Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2AG

- 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 Mrs Deborah Davies against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2022/40776, dated 19 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'a dropped kerb outside the house for a new driveway'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dropped kerb outside the house for a new driveway at 32 Grappenhall Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2AG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2022/40776, dated 19 January 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: TQRQM22006132225476

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Stockton Heath Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Number 32 Grappenhall Road (No 32) is located within the Stockton Heath Conservation Area (CA). Grappenhall Road forms part of the CA and is predominately residential in character, consisting of large detached and semi-detached dwellings with low brick boundary walls to their frontage. The significance of the CA is derived from the Edwardian design and detailing of the properties which along with their low-level brick boundary treatments gives the area an overall uniformity in appearance.
4. No 32 is a three-storey semi-detached dwelling which faces onto Grappenhall Road. It includes a small front garden with a footpath running from the pavement to the house. The property has retained its traditional design and appearance including the low brick boundary wall running along its frontage, maintaining its uniformity in appearance with the other properties along Grappenhall Road. This contributes positively to the significance of the CA.

5. The proposal seeks the provision of a dropped kerb measuring approximately 2.75 metres in width to facilitate vehicular access to the property. Dropped kerbs are a common feature in this part of the CA, with the majority of properties on the northern side of Grappenhall Road and several on the southern side already having dropped kerbs and driveways to their front. As such the proposed development would not represent an alien feature in the street scene.
6. The proposed dropped kerb would be located towards the western end of the site's frontage, adjacent to the existing opening in the boundary wall for the footpath to the property. Although specific details have not been provided, the existing opening would clearly need to be widened to allow vehicular access. The provision of an opening wide enough for vehicular access at one end of the existing boundary wall would be entirely in keeping with the prevailing form of frontages in this part of the CA. The works necessary to widen the existing opening and provide vehicular access would be relatively minor and would not result in any harm being caused to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. No 32 forms part of a continuous row of five pairs of semi-detached properties on the southern side of Grappenhall Road which do not currently have dropped kerbs. Although the frontages of these properties are currently uniform in appearance, the predominant pattern of frontages in this part of the CA are low brick boundary walls with a dropped kerb and openings of various widths at one end so to allow vehicular access. This layout is repeated several times within the street scene. I do not consider therefore that the addition of one extra dropped kerb would unduly interrupt the pattern of frontages or result in harm being caused to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. I acknowledge that, along with a number of properties on the southern side of Grappenhall Road, No 32 has existing vehicular access and parking to the rear of the property. However, given the size of the property I do not consider that the existence of a limited amount of parking to the rear precludes the need for further off-street parking to the front.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm being the character or appearance of the area. It would therefore have a neutral effect, preserving the character and appearance of the CA. Consequently, I find no conflict with Policies QE7 and QE8 of the Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) which seek, amongst other matters, to ensure that developments reinforce local distinctiveness and protect the fabric and setting of heritage assets.

Other Matters

10. Concerns were also raised in respect of highway safety and that the proposed development would reduce the amount of on street parking available in the area. Whilst the proposal would result in a small reduction in the amount of on-street parking available, it would also create at least one additional off-street parking space for use by the occupants of No 32. I did not observe any on-street parking issues during my site visit nor did there appear to be any highway safety concerns associated with the appeal proposal. I also note that the Council's Highways Team raised no objection. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to any highway safety or parking concerns.

Conditions

11. I have imposed the standard condition relating to the commencement of development, as well as one confirming the approved plans for the sake of certainty. A further condition requiring the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development to match those used in the existing building was also suggested, however I do not consider such a condition to be appropriate or necessary in this case.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

David Jones

INSPECTOR