



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2022

by Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/D/22/3303450

6 Beech Road, Aughton, ORMSKIRK, L39 6SJ

- 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 Lloyd Crosbie against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2022/0255/FUL, dated 4 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is Two-storey extension to side and single-storey extension to rear, subsequent to demolition of existing outrigger and detached garage. .
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the extent to which the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Holt Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in the Holt Green Conservation Area (CA). This modest CA is set in a small village which has an open, tranquil, and verdant character, derived from the hedged and treed gardens and its rural location. It was designated in 1975 and reviewed in 1985. I have been provided with a draft Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) dated 2005.
4. The CA is drawn to include the Victorian and Edwardian houses, most of which lie on relatively large plots, which were built around the centre of the village on the existing routes from the surrounding countryside. These converge on a small area of grass with a stone cross at its centre and an attractive Victorian extended former school building at its core.
5. However, Beech Road, which includes early twentieth century houses of note, such as the appeal site, appears to have been built as a residential street with a number of half timbered, rendered and brick houses of differing designs. Some of these have been extended, including no 5 opposite the appeal site, to which I have been referred.
6. The significance of the CA, as far as applicable to the appeal before me, derives from its open, spacious, verdant nature, the variety of homes built during the early twentieth century, of differing styles and materials, but which are of a similar scale, and sit within generous plots, and which for the most part retain their early twentieth century character and appearance and are vulnerable to unsympathetic change.

7. The Council has no objection in principle to a single storey extension to the rear, a position with which I concur.
8. The proposed development would result in the demolition of the garage. This has half-timber detailing, appears to have been built contemporaneously with the house and is mirrored, albeit it is not exactly the same, by a similar garage at the neighbouring property, no 8 Beech Road. From my site visit, it was clear that very few examples of these garages remain within the CA, and that the pair make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. Moreover, its loss would also disrupt the relationship and arrangement of the two properties.
9. The proposed two storey extension would be physically smaller than the host property and set back from the front elevation. However, it would extend around half the depth of the property, rather than the existing situation where the garage is set back in line with the rear of the property which gives an open aspect contributing to the spacious nature of the CA. Even with the hedging, characteristic of the area, the generous gap between the properties is particularly evident when travelling or walking towards Bold Lane. This would be eroded were the development to proceed as the extension would be highly visible across the gardens to the front of the properties.
10. The ridge line of the pitch roof to the extension would be considerably lower than that of the host property. Notwithstanding that I note that there is a discrepancy in the plans, as it is unclear whether the ridge line would sit below or truncate the chimney on the southern roof plane, the proposed relationship of the extension to the host property, including the eaves, and the use of half timbering as a decorative feature, would appear clumsy and draw the eye away from the original frontage of the property. Consequently, its design, and scale would not appear to be subservient to no 6 Beech Road. As such, this would be harmful to the character and appearance of this important building which together with nos 5, 6 and 8, are identified within the draft CAA, as helping to define the character of Beech Road, and make a positive contribution to the CA as a whole.
11. Cumulatively, the loss of the garage, together with the position, design and bulk of the extension to the side, would result in failing to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and would result in less than substantial harm.
12. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. The appellant wishes to extend his property and to provide a layout which meets his existing and future lifestyle. However, whilst I understand the wish to shape the property to meet the needs of his family, this is private benefit which does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
14. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA as a whole, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 202 of the Framework and development plan policies GN3 and EN4 of the West Lancashire Local Plan adopted in 2013 which remain broadly consistent with the policies of the Framework. These

require development not to adversely harm, and to enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

15. There is no dispute that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, shrubs, or trees, nor highway safety and that the principle of development within the settlement boundary is acceptable. However, this lack of harm in these respects has no impact on my conclusion set out above.
16. I have been referred to other extensions, and alterations, which have been permitted in the immediate vicinity, such as at nos 5 and 7 Beech Road. Nonetheless, as previously set out above there is a variety in the design of the properties within the CA, and in this particular instance, given the site-specific circumstances of the proposal before me, I have concluded that the proposed development would result in harm to the CA.

Conclusion

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

Louise Nurser

INSPECTOR