



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2022

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4223/W/22/3302465

56 Greenbridge Lane, Greenfield OL3 7JR

- 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 Victoria Kilgannon of Aspire Construction Projects Ltd against Oldham Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/347882/21, is dated 8 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing retail unit to provide residential development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a single-storey, flat roofed commercial unit near the junction of Greenbridge Lane and Chew Valley Road. To the north of the site is a row of two storey terraces that principally front onto Chew Valley Road. The adjacent corner-turning property has a truncated hipped roof.
4. The appeal premises front onto Greenbridge Lane which is characterised by two storey detached and semi-detached houses. Although the properties vary in design, the front elevations are domestic in scale and there is a harmonious rhythm to the fenestration along the street. This contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposed three-storey building would not reflect the scale and mass of properties that predominate on Greenbridge Lane and Chew Valley Road. It would be a visually discordant addition in both street scenes due to the height and bulk of the roof and the failure to respond to the prevailing pattern of roofs as they step down along Greenbridge Lane. The development would be unduly prominent, and it would stand out as being visually incongruous.
6. Furthermore, the proposed number, size and arrangement of window openings would be at odds with the existing rhythm of fenestration in the area. The increase in the number of windows across three main rows would unbalance the otherwise harmonious elevation treatment along the street. Moreover, the proposed openings would not relate well to the spacings between the upper and lower openings of other properties along Greenbridge Lane.

7. The appellant contends that the proposal would be a visual improvement on the current flat roof which they suggest has no character. However, even though the proposed eaves would align with the adjoining property to the north, the introduction of a gabled roof next to the truncated hip of the adjacent corner-turning property would draw the eye. The development would have an awkward presence in the street scene, and would not, as the appellant suggests, largely obscure the angled form of the adjoining roof. Consequently, the proposal would have a poor degree of integration with the adjoining building.
8. Overall, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the area. A previous scheme at the site¹, although of a different design, also showed an increased number of openings and a gable roof adjacent to the truncated hip of the corner property. The Inspector in that case found the scheme to provide little of the characteristic spacing between the upper and lower openings on Greenbridge Lane, and the introduction of contrary roof pitches to be visually confusing. As such, while I note that the revised scheme addresses some of the Inspector's concerns, several issues remain despite the design changes in this appeal scheme.
9. For the reasons given, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with policies 9 and 20 of the Oldham Local Development Framework Development Plan Document – Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2011). These policies seek to ensure that development does not cause harm to the visual appearance of an area and respond positively to its environment and site, contributing to a distinctive sense of place and making a positive contribution to the street scene.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has expressed frustrations with the Council's handling of the application. However, this does not affect my consideration of the planning merits of the case.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. The Council concedes that it cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In such circumstances, paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) indicates that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
12. The proposal would assist in remedying the shortfall in housing supply by delivering four new homes on a previously developed site in a location which is accessible to services and facilities. The main parties agree that the dwellings would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants and that satisfactory access and parking provision can be achieved. However, the harm to the character and appearance of the area is such that the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. Therefore, the proposal would not constitute sustainable development in terms of the Framework. Accordingly, I find that the proposal conflicts with the

¹ APP/W4223/W/21/3274384, presented by the appellant and referenced in the Council's officer report.

development plan taken as a whole, and there are no material considerations to indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR