



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2023

by M J Francis BA (Hons) MA MSc MCIfA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/22/3299884

The Royal British Legion, Towneley Road, Longridge PR3 3EA

- 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 PWA Planning against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2020/0960, dated 30 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 November 2021.
 - The development is proposed residential development of 13no. apartments following the demolition of the social club.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is highway safety, with particular regard to disabled parking and loading.

Reasons

Highway safety

3. Towneley Road, on which the appeal site is located, is a cul-de-sac, close to the town centre of Longridge. It is mainly residential in character with traditional terraced housing and small developments of bungalows that lead off Towneley Road. At the end of the street there is a large development of two storey social retirement housing, described as Towneley Road and Park House. Next to the appeal site is a short terrace of modern housing which has been built on the site of the original car park for The Royal British Legion site. The site is in walking distance of Longridge town centre where there are good transport links by both bus and train to the wider area, including Preston and Blackburn.

a) Disabled parking

4. Apart from the bungalows which have on-site or in curtilage parking and the social retirement housing, where there is dedicated car parking, all other properties on the length of Towneley Road park on the street.
5. The proposal would be constructed to Part M4(2) of Building Regulations to meet the mobility needs of the over 55 age group. As such, it is likely that there would be a demand for disabled parking spaces from residents of the new apartment block. Indeed, whilst I acknowledge that the services of Longridge are in relatively easy reach either by foot or public transport, the Council

require that a minimum of one disabled parking space should be provided for the proposed development.

6. Details of three appeal decisions¹ and a local appeal² that relate to specialist housing have been provided by the appellant in support of their case. These are noted. However, those appeals demonstrate the importance and economic, social, and environmental benefits of providing older persons accommodation rather than the matters before me related to highway safety and are in different locations to the proposed development. Therefore, I will be considering the scheme before me based on its own planning merits.
7. As such, the appellant contends that options for providing a disabled parking space, either on site, the road or adjacent to the building would neither be adequate or possible to achieve. They have, however, suggested purchasing parking permits for a public car park, and providing a charging point elsewhere. The appellants have also suggested contributing to raised bus kerbs at two bus stops, which they see as a benefit. Nonetheless, I concur with the Council that whilst this might encourage the use of sustainable transport, the fact remains that it would not mitigate the need for an accessible disabled parking space for the proposed development.
8. I acknowledge car ownership levels associated with the development are likely to be low. However, given that some of the residents of working age might have more than one vehicle, in my view the absence of a disabled parking space would result in an increase in vehicles parking in nearby roads. Therefore, the proposal would add to parking stress in the surrounding area and harm highway safety.

b) Loading

9. The proposal would not include parking provision for off-loading service vehicles. As such, although the width of Towneley Road enables two cars to park opposite each other, any unloading vehicle would be likely to block the road and potentially prevent access to the retirement housing beyond the site that can only be accessed along Towneley Road.
10. The appellant contends that the Council has not quantified deliveries or what the likely demand for off-loading will be, and that there have been no recorded traffic accidents on the street. The appellant has also brought to my attention that the former use of the building as a social club had regular servicing, delivery and refuse collections without adversely affecting road safety or residential amenity.
11. Furthermore, I acknowledge the appellants parking survey which has found that despite the on-street parking, there is space available in the immediate vicinity for continued kerbside delivery and refuse collections for a short duration without completely blocking through vehicle movements or that of pedestrians. They consider that a dedicated loading bay for a site of this nature and scale is unreasonable so suggested an on-street loading bay or service management plan.
12. However, I visited the site at midday during the week, and there was limited, if any, available parking on the road. Concerns have been expressed that the

¹ APP/Q3115/W/20/3265861, APP/F0114/W/21/3268794, APP/H2265/W/18/3202040

² APP/T2350/W/20/3247676

road is already congested. Additionally, parking is already limited by the position of driveways accessing Towneley Road and the entrance into Auction Court and the wide junction opposite the appeal site that is the continuation of Towneley Road. There is also no parking beyond the corner of the road adjoining Towneley House and Park House, as this has double yellow lines to ensure access and parking to this site. Moreover, in terms of the previous use of the site, it is likely that deliveries, and parking for the social club would have been more intermittent than would be expected to a block of 13 apartments which are continuously occupied. Therefore, the lack of parking provision for deliveries and service vehicles would lead to pressure to on-street parking.

13. I conclude that the inability to provide any parking to enable disabled people to access the site and the lack of parking provision for deliveries and service vehicles would harm highway safety.
14. Overall, the proposal would be contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which says that development must consider potential traffic and car parking implications, and not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.
15. For similar reasons it would also not accord with advice given in Paragraph 13 of the Framework which aims include the creation of places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Other Matters

16. The site both abuts and slightly extends into the Longridge Conservation Area. Regard must be had to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The Council deemed in the officer report that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced. While there have been some concerns regarding the design of the building, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, there would be no harm to its significance. Even if there were an enhancement, and the Council consider that the loss of an unsightly building on the edge of the conservation area is a benefit, given the peripheral nature of the site in relation to the conservation area, this does not outweigh the harm I have found above.

Planning balance and conclusion

17. While the Council is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, there are a number of benefits of the scheme which include the provision of housing close to local amenities and public transport links, the removal of an unviable, unsightly building, and the effect on the local economy from the construction and occupation of new housing. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

M J Francis

INSPECTOR