



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2023

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/D/23/3320856

18 Watson Road, Sheffield, S10 2SD

- 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 DM Boddington against the decision of the Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03947/FUL dated 29 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is provision of bike/bin store with green roof to front of dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as it more concisely describes the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling as well as the Broomhill Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling which stands within the Broomhill Conservation Area (CA). The appeal site is designated as being of townscape merit via the CA Article 4 Direction which removes certain permitted development rights to development at the front of dwellinghouses. The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a bike/bin store constructed of timber with a green roof to the front of the appeal site in front of the dwelling. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the CA.
5. The appeal site stands within a row of four pairs of semi-detached Victorian-era dwellinghouses on Watson Road, close to the junction with Newbould Lane. At the time of my site visit I both drove down and walked up Watson Road and found that the row of dwellings within which the appeal site stands appeared notably uniform in both character and appearance which results in the architectural features of the dwellings being viewed consistently together. The area is characterised by the dwellings, within the row, having small gardens with a number of stone dwarf walls/hedges and gate piers. This results in mainly visually open gardens which are free from development, due to low

boundary features, which allows the architectural features of the dwellings to be read together. Such views would be slightly obscured when standing on the opposite side of the road (due to parked cars along that side of Watson Road) but views from the pavement outside the appeal site would be prominent of the appeal proposal.

6. The proposed timber structure for the bike/bin store would be located within a relatively small space right at the front of the appeal site. I acknowledge that at the time of my site visit there were three bins in the front garden of the appeal site and indeed, I noted bins in the front gardens of adjacent properties. Despite this, I did not find them particularly visually dominant and, whilst such domestic paraphernalia can often be unsightly, it is often unavoidable to some extent as a result of living in more historic settings. Despite the presence of bins in the front gardens, the lack of solid built form still presents as an openness which allows the front of the dwellings in question, and their characteristic shared features, to be appreciated within the street scene.
7. The proposed structure, by comparison to the existing bins, would fill a notable part of the front garden as well as partly obscure views of the front elevation of the host dwelling with a height that would exceed the cill level of the bay window which is a characteristic of dwellings within this row. There would, therefore, be an awkward visual interaction with the host dwelling as a result of the structure being viewed against, and partly over the bottom of, the bay window obscuring views of both this characteristic window and any space behind which is retained as garden area. This would result in a general loss of openness when viewed within the street scene.
8. It is noted that it is stated that the loss of garden space would equate to around a third of the area of front garden, however, it is proposed to be located adjacent to the front boundary closest to the pavement, which would equate to a circa 3.5 metre length of the structure being in the most visually prominent space at the front of the site. As a result of this, I find that the proposal would, by reason of its siting, character, form, scale and massing would be out of keeping with the character of the dwelling house itself and would be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and setting of the CA. This would result in less than substantial harm to the CA.
9. For the reasons outlined above, I do not find that the designated heritage asset, the CA, is conserved by the proposal as a result of the less than substantial harm which has been identified. This is not alleviated by a lack of foundation required in the front garden to accommodate the store, and I do not consider that the proposal could be considered temporary given that its location upon the land would be permanent. There is no intention for the structure to be located in a temporary manner i.e., removed within a period of time which could be reasonably classed as temporary. It would remain to serve the dwelling at the appeal site.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (The Framework) states, in paragraph 199, that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation (and the more importantly the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total or less than substantial harm to its significance. In accordance with the Framework, paragraph 202, where a development

proposal would do less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

11. The proposal is for storage which would be for the use of a single residential dwelling and whilst I evidently acknowledge the benefits of cycling and sustainable transport in both terms of mental health and economics, I do not necessarily consider these to be benefits which are public benefits nor securing optimal viable use to outweigh the weight which should be given to the harm which has been identified. The front garden would still be utilised for storage of bins and ultimately be a residential garden and thus I find that this is already an optimal viable use.
12. The proposal would be contrary to Sheffield Unitary Development Plan 1998 (UDP) Policy H14 which requires that new buildings and extensions are well designed and would be in scale and character with neighbouring buildings, UDP Policy BE5 which requires good design, UDP Policy BE16, which requires development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and UDP Policy BE17 which requires a high standard of design to ensure any development within the CA preserves or enhances its character. The proposal would also be contrary to Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy 2009 (CS) Policy CS74 which requires high quality development which respects, takes advantage of and enhances the distinctive features of the City, its Districts and Neighbourhoods including layout and built form, building styles and materials.

Other Matters

13. I note that there are letters in support of the proposal, however, a lack of objection is a neutral consideration. I have considered matters relating to character of the building and area within the main issue above within this decision letter and I have no evidence before me that the shelter would reduce the number of cars parked along the road which would, in turn, improve the area's character. The benefits of a green roof and planting, upon the structure, are noted, but this would not overcome the issue I have found with regard to scale, massing and siting in the front garden of the appeal site for the reasons I have outlined earlier within this decision letter.
14. I note the appellant's reference to points E, F, G and H within CS Policy CS74. At the time of my site visit, I did not find that the environment has become run down, nor is it lacking in distinctiveness. The character of the area is as described earlier within this decision letter and the sustainability benefits of, for example, cycling and planting as a result of the living roof are acknowledged but I do not consider that they outweigh the great weight which should be attributed to the less than substantial harm to the CA as outlined above nor amount to public benefits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR