



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2024

by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/24/3343845

45 New Street, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5AE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Caz Naylor against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/05551/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Fitting of x12 Solar Panels, 6 of which will be on the rear facing roof and 6 will have to be on the front facing roof, facing the street.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area including the Wem Conservation Area (WCA).

Reasons

3. New Street is predominantly residential in character, with some community uses on the eastern side of the street. The housing around the appeal site consists of a two-storey terraced row. The building is brick built, with brick soldier course details over windows, arched detailing over doors, stone windowsills and slate roofs and therefore consists of traditional materials. The terraced row is set at the back of footway, having a strong street presence. The appeal dwelling is similar to adjacent development and therefore makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The WCA is focussed around High Street with the western side of New Street, and including the appeal site, being within the conservation area. My statutory duty¹, requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The significance of the WCA appears to derive from the traditional form of plot patterns and architecture that demonstrates its original formation as an industrial town and having dense urban character. Paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to an asset's conservation when considering the impact of the proposal on its significance.
5. The proposed scheme would place solar panels on the front and rear roof planes. The rear plane is not visible from the public realm and panels here would have a limited effect on the appearance of the building. The proposed

¹ section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

panels have a roof integrated mounting system, where they would be recessed into the roof. Nonetheless, the frontage panels would be patently evident in wide views within the street as a different and roofing material. These would be a contemporary addition, with a modern feature that would not complement the traditional form of the building in materiality or appearance. These would therefore be overt, pronounced additions that would be out of keeping with the historic appearance of the dwelling and its position within a row of similar styled development.

6. The appeal site is especially overt being opposite the driveway of Edinburgh House. This provides further distant views of the roof, where the proposed panels would be especially prominent. For these reasons, the panels on the frontage would be a visually harmful addition to the appearance of the dwelling and terrace. A rooflight is noted on the side roof of 49 New Street, but this can be only viewed in glimpses from the street due to its position, limiting its effect on the building's significance. The dwellings within the terraced row have been altered, through replacement doors and windows and through the addition of satellite dishes, moderately eroding their significance. However, they still maintain a generally intact form and appearance.
7. Consequently, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the WCA. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with policies CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Core Strategy [2011], policies MD2 and MD13 of the Site Allocation and Management of Development Plan [2015] and the Framework. These seek, among other matters, for development to respect locally distinctive or valued character and avoid harm or loss of significance to designated heritage assets.
8. The harm identified to the conservation area would be 'less than substantial'. Paragraph 208 of the Framework, states that where harm to a heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' this should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
9. The Planning Practice Guidance explains that increasing the amount of renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply. Microgeneration projects, by individuals to meet their own needs, also play an important part in combatting climate change. Although the Framework recognises that even small-scale microgeneration projects can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it does not confer an automatic approval of such schemes. As such, this benefit, even if deemed a public benefit, would be of only moderate weight in favour of the scheme. In contrast, the Framework requires great weight to be afforded to the conservation of a heritage asset. As such, the benefits would not outweigh the harm found to the conservation area, which the Framework identifies as an irreplaceable resource.
10. For the above reasons, the appeal does not succeed.

Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR