



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2024

by K Mansell BA (Hons) MPhil TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/24/3346711

4 Shaw Terrace, Grindleton, BB7 4RA

- 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 Ms D Murray against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/2024/0149.
 - The development proposed is formation of proposed new driveway.
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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 or appearance of the Grindleton Conservation Area (GCA).

Reasons

3. Shaw Terrace is a row of traditional cottages orientated perpendicular to Greendale View, part of Main Street that runs through the small village of Grindleton. The appeal property at No 4 sits furthest from the road. It has an 'L' shaped garden that is somewhat elevated from the pavement and extends behind those of the adjacent dwellings with a frontage to the highway. It is edged with a stone boundary wall that continues for some length to also form the perimeter to No 1's garden. The appeal proposal would demolish a section of this wall to create a parking area for No 4.
4. No 4 lies within the GCA where s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Council's GCA Area Appraisal (GCAA) identifies the CA's special interest to include the village's setting within the wider landscape, the distinctive form and arrangement of streets and buildings and its architectural qualities, derived not least from the stone used in the construction of dwellings and boundary walls.
5. From my observations on site, such features of special interest are evident within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site. Main Street is an important linear route through the village that is tightly enclosed by both the flank and front elevations of cottages and their boundaries, which typically comprise gritstone walls of varying heights, as well as hedgerows. Although broken intermittently by points of access to properties, including some driveways, these elements form a reasonably solid edge to enclose the street. This contributes positively to the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole, and thus its special interest and significance.

6. The appeal scheme would result in the loss of a section of wall that forms a prominent edge to Main Street. In its entirety, it extends to about 30 metres and approximately 5.5 metres would be removed to facilitate the driveway. Whilst the appeal site is not identified as a significant open space, nor within a key view within the GCAAA, it is the unbroken consistency of this wall, combined with its prominent position along a key route through the village, that significantly contributes to the quality of the area. Although stone boundaries elsewhere along Main Street are occasionally interrupted by pedestrian or vehicular entrances, or access to land to the rear of the main road, the loss of this significant section of walling would be sufficiently noticeable at street level to result in harm to the character and appearance of the street and, therefore, to the GCA.
7. Furthermore, the car parking and turning area would be at a slightly elevated level to the pavement. Consequently, the opening would provide a direct view into this raised driveway. Whilst the boundary wall to either side of it would partly screen any parked vehicles, it would not be so high as to conceal them completely. The parking area would also be sited some distance from the appeal property towards the bottom of the garden. From the site, I observed no other driveways that were similarly located, with other parking areas being typically within the front garden or adjacent to the dwelling. Even if any parked cars would be seen within the context of the existing garden outbuildings, the driveway would nonetheless be visually prominent within the street scene. It would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and fail to make a positive contribution to the GCA.
8. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the GCA. Given its modest scale, in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm to the significance of the GCA as a whole would be less than substantial. However, having regard to Paragraph 208 of the Framework, such harm should then be weighed against the public benefits of the appeal scheme.
9. I appreciate that the proposal would make it easier for the occupiers of No 4 to load and unload goods to their house, without having to cross the road. However, from my observations on site, this is not an uncommon situation within the village. Whilst the walking distance may not be desirable and it would lack the convenience afforded by the proposal, I have nothing before me, such as highway safety concerns, to demonstrate that this would be anything other than a private benefit.
10. I also recognise that the GCAAA identifies parking along the Main Street as a negative feature of the GCA. However, it also refers to the provision of a car park within the village for use by residents and visitors to mitigate it, rather than individual off-street parking opportunities. Furthermore, even if the proposal would not decrease the availability of spaces on Main Street given the custom to park on the opposite side of the road to the appeal scheme, and it would provide off-street parking for two cars to reduce the extent of parking on the road, given the scale of the proposal, the public benefit would be modest.
11. Moreover, whilst there was no objection from the local highway authority, I am mindful that paragraphs 205 and 206 of the Framework advise that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, and any harm to its significance should require clear and convincing justification. The very limited public benefit afforded to reducing on-street parking would not amount to that. Any public benefit derived from a single electric vehicle charging point would be

similarly limited. Consequently, the public benefits would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the GCA that I have identified.

12. For these reasons, the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the GCA, which, it follows, would not be preserved or enhanced. Accordingly, it would conflict with the Act and be contrary to Key Statement EN5 and Policies DMG1 and DME4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028. These policies seek, amongst other matters, to ensure the protection and enhancement of heritage assets, including conserving and, where appropriate, enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. It would further conflict with the heritage objectives of the Framework.

Conclusion

13. The appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that would indicate a decision otherwise would be appropriate. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Mansell

INSPECTOR