



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2019

by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th February 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/18/3214394

8 Westgate Villas, Salop Street, Bridgnorth WV16 4QX

- 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 Dr William Hammerton against the decision of Shropshire Council.
- The application Ref 18/02636/FUL, dated 8 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 10 August 2018.
- The development proposed is the demolition of existing attached single storey car port. Erection of new 2 storey extension with drive/car parking below to form new flexible use/gym room.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The name of the appellant is given as Dr William Hammerton on the planning appeal form, whereas the name appearing on the application form lodged with the Council and repeated in the Council's decision notice is Mr Coutts. As the right of appeal would normally rest solely with the original applicant, subsequent correspondence involving Mr Coutts and Dr Hammerton took place with the Planning Inspectorate, which has clarified the matter. As the matter is not in dispute, I have proceeded on the basis that Dr Hammerton is the appellant in this case.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bridgnorth Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The area is predominantly residential in character and includes dwellings of various sizes and styles. The appeal site is a semi-detached property, at the western end of a row of similar three-storey villas. It is also adjacent to a bungalow, No 9 Westgate (No 9), which is set back from the building line of the villas.
5. The site is within the western part of the Bridgnorth Conservation Area (BCA). Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to an asset's conservation when considering the impact of a proposal on its significance. In terms of significance, the

Council's character appraisal (appraisal) identifies that Bridgnorth is an exceptionally well preserved market town. The appraisal states that the greatest contribution, to Bridgnorth's special character and appearance, is the concentration of listed buildings and other important historic buildings in the area. The appraisal also notes that Westgate Villas are "late Victorian...with varied details including turned wood porches and 'timber framed' gables...and are little altered." As such the villas, and the relative uniformity of their group, make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

6. The proposal consists of a two storey side extension of contemporary style and materials. This would be set back from the front building line and subordinate to the host dwelling. Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Practice Framework (Framework) states that "great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design which...help raise the standard of design", provided they complement the overall form and layout of their surroundings. Therefore, whilst the principle of contemporary design is supported, it is important that it be incorporated in a way sympathetic to the existing property and its traditional form. The proposal includes zinc and timber cladding, a shallow roof and a lantern roof light. Despite the form being subordinate and having no objection to the principle of contemporary architecture, I find nevertheless, that the proposal bears no resemblance to the host dwelling in terms of form, material or arrangement. Consequently, it would not be a comfortable addition. As such the proposal would not preserve or enhance the appearance of the existing dwelling or terrace and would instead be read as an anomalous addition.
7. The Council's appraisal identifies the significance of the terrace through the quality of materials, detailing and condition of the asset. The appellant's assessment concludes that the proposal would not devalue significance, in terms of setting or associated values. The proposal benefits from space to the side of the host dwelling. I find that the current space is important as it enables the terrace to be properly understood as a group. The host dwelling has a small side extension which is set back from the frontage and aligns with the adjacent property at No 9, which is not appreciably read as part of the terrace. Whereas, I find that the proposal would be an overt addition, which would poorly relate to both the terrace row and bungalow, principally due to its treatment of form and material.
8. The appeal site is in a prominent location, even though partly screened by mostly deciduous trees. It has a highly visible side elevation when viewed from the west. This is as a result of the set back and single-storey form of No 9 and the curvature of the road. This view presents Westgate Terrace in a relatively isolated view, with space around it and acts as an attractive entrance to the conservation area. In contrast, the proposal would be a discordant addition to the terrace, lacking a coherent language, which would contrast with the form and materials of the terrace. Therefore, due to the prominence of the side elevation, and the form and materials of the proposal, the scheme would also relate poorly to the wider area and would materially harm the character and appearance of the BCA.
9. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with Policy CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011) which, amongst other things, seeks development that protects and conserves the historic environment and contributes to local distinctiveness, respectively.

The proposal would also fail against Policies MD2 and MD13 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development plan 2015 which seek, amongst other things, to respond positively and respect to local character and to avoid harm or loss of significance to heritage assets, respectively.

10. Given the prominent location and design of the proposal, the proposed extension would cause harm to the significance of the conservation area. In terms of the advice in paragraph 196 of the Framework, the harm to the conservation area would be 'less than substantial' affecting only its immediate surroundings. The Framework sets out the need to address 'less than substantial harm' in a balanced manner against the public benefits associated with such schemes, recognising that any harm is of considerable importance and weight. The appellant has stated that the proposal would enhance the character of the conservation area and would remove the unsightly existing car port. However, as I have found to the contrary, and consider that the modest car port has only a neutral impact on the significance of the area, I do not concur that these are benefits. No compelling additional arguments have been put forward and accordingly any negligible public benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to heritage assets, which the Framework identifies are an irreplaceable resource.

Other Matters

11. There are two listed buildings within sight of the appeal site. The water conduit head (listed grade II) is located at the junction of Ludlow Road and Westgate. It is significant due to its highly decorative nature and good condition. No's 30 and 30a Salop Street (listed grade II) are two terraced properties and significant due to their age, condition and form. I am satisfied that both would be preserved by the proposal due to the separation distance and the relative small scale of the proposal.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to schemes elsewhere in the BCA and other examples of contemporary additions. I have few details about these schemes and as such I am unable to assess whether the appeal proposal would be comparable with them. Accordingly, I have assessed this appeal on its own merits.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, having taken all submitted matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR