The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2017

by Mike Worden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11th December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/3180797
The Monkhouse, Prince George Street, Cheadle ST10 1HX

- 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 Mr A Chatterton against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2017/0255, dated 20 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2017.
- The development proposed is three detached residential dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Both the appellant's Grounds of Appeal and Planning and Heritage Statement make reference to the proposed dwellings being three bedroomed, with two bedrooms on the ground floor and one bedroom on the first floor. However, the plans submitted with the application clearly show that each of the dwellings has only two bedrooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The Council's report also refers to the proposed dwellings as being two bedroomed. It is the submitted plan which I have had regard to in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is part of the curtilage of a large detached dwelling, The Monkhouse. The site lies on a steep hill, also called The Monkhouse, which rises from the town centre and from the appeal site there are views out across the town to the countryside beyond. The appeal site is separated from Prince George Street by a stone wall. Prince George Street is a narrow one way road running parallel with the High Street. It rises up towards the appeal site and then down again. The area is residential with a significant mix of sizes and types of properties and outbuildings situated on or close to Prince George Street. Immediately next to the appeal site is a row of Victorian terraces which sit close to the edge of the road whilst opposite there are more modern houses and bungalows.

5. The appeal site is part of the Cheadle Conservation Area and the hill and the narrow streets including Prince George Street, the non-uniform shaped and tight spaces off them and the footpaths down to the town centre, form a

distinct element of the character of the Conservation Area. The hill is prominent in views from the town centre and the houses which stand on it are an important characteristic of the Conservation Area and recognised as such within the Council's *Cheadle Conservation Area Character Appraisal*.

6. The proposed development would comprise three detached dwellings which would be located on the bank behind the stone wall. The dwellings are in the form of two bedroomed chalet type properties. The dwellings would sit in a row, with gables facing Prince George Street. The front gables would have a high degree of fenestration.

7. There is an extant planning permission on the site for residential development which the applicant maintains has commenced. The proposed development would be located on the part of the site where planning permission was granted for four terraced houses. The ridge heights of the dwellings proposed in the current scheme would be lower than in the consented terrace block and the roofs would run perpendicular to Prince George Street.

8. The proposed dwellings would represent a different form of development than exists close by in the Prince George Street area and would appear dominant in the streetscape. Whilst the development around is varied and non-uniform, the three proposed dwellings together in this location would jar somewhat with the established character of Prince George Street and the hill behind it. With their gable fronted design, they would appear in stark contrast to, and out of place with, the Victorian terrace row which lies immediately adjacent to the site. Although the proposed dwellings could be viewed from the key town centre locations I was referred to, after visiting both the town centre public car park and the Morrisons car park, I consider the greatest impact is likely to be more on the Prince George Street area of the Conservation Area.

9. I have had regard to the extant planning permission which includes two contemporary designed houses sat at the back of the site. However these dwellings are not yet built and the houses at the back would have less of a direct relationship with the properties and streetscape of Prince George Street than the proposal before me. I have also had regard to the appeal decision referred to me. The Inspector in determining that appeal considered that a proposed terraced block would complement the form of traditional buildings in the Conservation Area. However I have not been provided with details of that scheme.

10. Both the Council and the appellant agree that the proposal would result in *less than substantial harm*, to the Conservation Area. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that where less than substantial harm is likely then the harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

11. The appellant maintains that the dwellings could be suitable for occupation by the elderly which the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment acknowledges need to be better provided for in the district and the policies of the Council support. The submitted plans clearly show one bedroom on the ground floor and one bedroom on the first floor. The proposed dwellings may be attractive to elderly persons but equally could be attractive to persons of any age. In any case no mechanism or means of controlling occupancy has been suggested by either the appellant or the Council. I have therefore placed only limited weight on this as a public benefit.

12. The appeal site lies very close to the High Street and within easy walking distance of the town centre shops and services. I have attached moderate weight to the benefits of new housing in this location.

13. The appellant's statement refers to a shortfall of five year housing land supply within the district. The Council does not dispute that it does not have a five year supply of housing land supply. Paragraph 49 of the Framework states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. That is the case here. In these circumstances paragraph 14 of the Framework indicates that permission should be granted, unless there are specific policies in the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted. Paragraph 134 of the Framework is such a specific policy relating to designated heritage assets.

14. The proposal would provide three dwellings which would help marginally with housing supply in the district. Although this would be one less dwelling than would occur with the extant permission on this part of the site, I have attached limited weight to this benefit.

15. The proposed dwellings would sit lower on the site than the extant scheme and this aspect has the support of a local resident who considers the current scheme would have a less impact on views out from their property. I have attached very limited weight to this issue as the view out from a private viewpoint is not a public benefit and I do not consider that the view across the town from the street above the site, The Monkhouse, would be significantly improved compared to the extant scheme, given the extensive foliage and boundary treatments. I have also had regard to the other representation made in support of this proposal over the extant scheme.

16. Whilst there would be some public benefits from the proposal, these are rather limited. For the reasons set out above I consider that the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area is not outweighed by the benefits. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area and would be contrary to Policies DC2 and DC1 of the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2014 – A Local Plan for the future of Staffordshire Moorlands* which respectively seek the safeguarding and enhancement of the historic environment; and amongst other things require development to be well designed, reinforce local distinctiveness and complement the special character and heritage of the area.

17. I have had regard to the statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and consider that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mike Worden

INSPECTOR