



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2013

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 April 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/A4710/A/12/2187718

Land at Blenheim Street, Hebden Bridge HX7 8BU

- 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 Notlaw Construction Ltd against the decision of Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 12/00858/FUL, dated 9 July 2012, was refused by notice dated 6 September 2012.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a pair of 2/3 storey semi-detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on pedestrian and highway safety on Blenheim Street and Marlborough Road.

Reasons

3. Blenheim Street is a small residential street that is located on a steep hillside above Hebden Bridge. The existing houses are predominantly 2/3 storey terraced houses which are set into the hillside. The appeal site is located on the south western side of Blenheim Street, beyond No 18 and adjacent to an external set of stone stairs that lead down the hillside. There is a similar set of steps that lead from Wadsworth Lane to Blenheim Street between No 11 and the side garden of No 15.
4. Blenheim Street is accessed from Marlborough Road with the junction of Blenheim Street and Marlborough Road being in quite close proximity to the junction of Marlborough Road and Wadsworth Lane / Birchcliffe Road. Although the two junctions are quite close the curve of the road and the presence of a large retaining wall means that there is no inter-visibility between the two junctions. The stretch of Marlborough Road between Wadsworth Lane and Blenheim Street is narrow and, apart from at the junction itself, is not wide enough for 2 cars to pass. After Blenheim Street, Marlborough Road drops steeply down the hill. The Highways Manager has confirmed that both these junctions are sub-standard.
5. The majority of houses on Blenheim Street have no off-street parking provision and therefore the demand for on-street parking is high, particularly at evenings and weekends. Whilst the road is wide enough to enable parking on both sides, the provision of a turning head at the southern end of the street, enables

vehicles to leave Blenheim Street in forward gear at times when the high level on on-street parking means that turning in the street is not possible. Given the substandard nature of the junction of Blenheim Street and Marlborough Road, I consider that this turning facility is important in terms of highway safety.

6. The turning head is provided on land opposite No 15 and 17 Blenheim Street. The entrance to the area where these two houses are located is narrower than the main street and there is a gate across the entrance. The appellant has noted that this gate prevents the use of the turning head by residents, however the residents have stated that the gate is never closed and that the turning head is available at all times for anyone to use.
7. The proposed development would enlarge the area around the existing turning head in order to provide 4 off-street parking spaces for the proposed houses. In order to accommodate the spaces the width of the existing turning head would be reduced. There is no evidence to show whether the reduced size of the turning head would still enable its use by vehicles. However whilst the size of the remaining turning head is likely to be sufficient to enable the majority of cars to be able to turn, it may not be adequate for larger vehicles to do so. Any vehicles unable to turn would need to reverse out of the street. Such hazardous manoeuvres would be detrimental to highway safety.
8. The pedestrian steps leading down from Wadsworth Lane are located immediately adjacent to the exit from the turning head. The presence of a high fence and planting along the boundary between the garden of No 15 and the steps means that vehicles leaving the area where the turning head is located have no visibility of pedestrians using these steps. The provision of parking for the proposed dwellings in this area would therefore lead to an intensification of the use of this area which I consider would be detrimental to safety of pedestrians.
9. As previously noted the junctions of Blenheim Street and Marlborough Road and Marlborough Road with Wadsworth Lane / Birchcliffe Road are far from ideal. Although I have not been provided with any accident data relating to these junctions I have been made aware of a recent accident involving one of the residents on Marlborough Road towards the junction with Wadsworth Lane / Birchcliffe Road.
10. At present there are 18 houses on Blenheim Street. The proposed development of 2 additional dwellings would therefore represent an 11% increase on the number of properties on the street which I consider to be a significant increase. Given the sub-standard nature of the junctions the intensification of use of these junctions that would be likely to result from the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety as it would increase the amount of potentially hazardous manoeuvres that road users would have to undertake.
11. In the ways set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would have the potential to materially increase the amount of hazardous manoeuvres required to be undertaken by road users on Blenheim Street and Marlborough Road. Consequently I consider the proposed development would be likely to have a detrimental impact on pedestrian and highway safety on these two roads. Accordingly it would be contrary to Policy BE5 of the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (adopted August 2006) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure the safe and free flow of traffic in the interests of

highway safety. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it relates to the need to ensure that safe access is provided to sites.

12. Accordingly for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR