

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 August 2016

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/16/3148076

Taylor's Service Centre, 1-3 Chelmsford Road Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1XG

- 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 J Taylor (Taylor's Service Centres Limited) against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref: UTT/16/0228/FUL, dated 18 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension to south west facing elevation, providing a covered car showroom display area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension to south west facing elevation, providing a covered car showroom display area at Taylor's Service Centre, 1-3 Chelmsford Road Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1XG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: UTT/16/0228/FUL, dated 18 January 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 4323 101 (Existing Floor Plan); 4323 102 (Block Plan); 4323 103 (Existing Elevations); 4323 104 (Proposed Floor Plan), 4323 105 (Block Plan); and 4323 106 (Proposed Elevations).
 - 3) Notwithstanding the details shown on the submitted plans, the external finishing materials of the works hereby approved shall match those of the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a large industrial style building, finished in brickwork at low level and metal cladding panels at the upper level, and which is currently used as a vehicle servicing facility and MOT testing station. On the rear (south west) elevation of the building where the proposed extension would be located is a lean to structure that is used for the storage of tyres and to accommodate
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- a metal storage container. The appeal building is located on an established industrial/trading estate on the periphery of Great Dunmow which consists of similar types of building in a range of uses.
4. Chelmsford Road, to the rear of the appeal building, is a busy main road leading into the town of Great Dunmow. Although there are varying degrees of tree and hedgerow cover to the sides of this road, the buildings on the industrial estate are visible above and through this and the character of the road is of one running through a built up area. My attention has also been drawn to a planning permission that has been granted for a large mixed use development on the opposite side of Chelmsford Road to the industrial estate which would reinforce this character.
 5. Saved Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 seeks to ensure, amongst other matters, that new development is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings and safeguards important environmental features in its setting. This policy is consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks a high standard of design.
 6. Whilst the proposed extension would run practically the whole length of the appeal building, at approximately 5.5 metres wide and 3.6 metres maximum height, it would remain subordinate to the original building and the curved roof and proposed materials are consistent with the external appearance of the original building. I note that the Council consider that the proposed extension is compatible in appearance and proportion to the existing building.
 7. The extension would bring the built form of the appeal building close to the edge of the footway adjacent to Chelmsford Road, nevertheless, the eaves would be just over 2 metres above ground level and the main elevation would primarily consist of glazing. Due to the low eaves height and the lightweight materials of the principal elevation of the extension, this would not in my view result in a structure which is excessively overbearing to users of the footway.
 8. Although the development would have an effect on the character of Chelmsford Road at this point, it does not automatically follow that any change would be harmful. Whilst the buildings within the industrial estate have a relatively uniform set back from Cheltenham Road, for part of the length of the road the buildings are partially obscured by trees and, consequently, the building line is not strong. I saw on my site visit that there are external display areas at the buildings at the entrance to Oak Industrial Park and at a car showroom and petrol filling station further to the south east which give it a commercial character.
 9. I also saw that there are a number of large and prominent advertisements on a building located just to the south east of the appeal building. The proposed extension would create a more active frontage onto Chelmsford Road and it is not in dispute between the parties that the extension is an appropriate design that is in proportion with the original building. Within this context, the introduction of an enclosed vehicle display area at the appeal building would be consistent with the commercial character of the area.
 10. Due to the location of the appeal building on a junction and the use of the verge adjacent to it for the display of vehicles, it is already quite prominent in the street scene when viewed from the north west. The relatively modest

projection of the extension and its low height would not significantly increase this.

11. The development would involve the removal of the hedgerow that is currently on the boundary between the appeal building and the footway. Whilst this does provide a degree of screening to the presently utilitarian rear of the building and the items stored at the rear, this stretch of hedgerow is a non-native species and consequently has less ecological value than the predominantly native hedgerow further beyond the appeal site boundary. There is no evidence before me that this hedgerow is protected or of significant environmental value which would warrant its retention.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Saved Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 which seek to ensure that new development is compatible with its context and safeguards important environmental features in its setting. It would also be consistent with the Framework which seeks a high standard of design in all new development.

Other matters

13. There is no dispute between the parties that the proposal represents sustainable development and that it would not have any adverse impact on neighbouring buildings or nearby residential properties. From the evidence before me and from what I saw on my site visit, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion on these matters.

Conditions

14. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council. In the interests of ensuring that the development is in keeping with the existing building and surrounding area, it is necessary to impose a condition requiring that the materials used in the development match those of the existing building. Although it has not been suggested by the Council, in order to provide certainty as to what has been permitted I have also imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR