
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by Siobhan Watson BA(Hons) MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/16/3157318
1B, Sandal Avenue, Wakefield, WF2 7LP

- 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 Locum Ltd against the decision of City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00587/FUL, dated 1 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is one block of 10 flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon (i) the character and appearance of the area including upon the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building; and (ii) highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The site is on the corner of Sandal Avenue and Barnsley Road and consists of a dormer bungalow with a large garden. Barnsley Road is a busy road with a variety of building types including a high school opposite the site whereas Sandal Avenue is a quiet tree lined residential street characterised by large 2 and 3 storey dwellings of differing architectural styles.
 4. The building would be much longer, wider and bulkier than the surrounding dwellings on Sandal Avenue. Although the building would relate more to Barnsley Road than Sandal Avenue, the side and rear of the building and its associated accesses and car parking areas would, nevertheless, be highly visible within Sandal Avenue and such a large scale development would be uncharacteristic of the smaller scale dwellings along the road.
 5. The building would also be extremely close to the boundary with Barnsley Road, whereas surrounding buildings on Barnsley Road tend to be a lot further set back from their front boundaries. It would, therefore, have an uncharacteristically prominent and overbearing impact upon the street-scene. Furthermore, the building would contain little visual interest due to its large rectangular shaped massing and small uniform windows. The elevations contain some set-backs but these are very shallow and the projecting gables
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are somewhat unbalanced in terms of their height and width. Overall, the building would be mundane, which would be unacceptable given the site's prominent corner position. It is highly unlikely that the trees along the boundary could be retained given the development's proposed proximity to them and there would be insufficient space left for replanting. The loss of this mature boundary planting would further exacerbate the negative impact of the building upon the street-scene.

6. The block of flats would be next door to 236 Barnsley Road, a Grade II Listed Building (LB) which is described as dating from the 17th Century. The LB is set back a long way from the road with a large front garden. Regardless of the boundary and the trees between the two sites, the appeal site serves as space around the LB. The existing house on the appeal site has little effect on the LB as it is of a small scale. However, the proposed building would be large and would project substantially forward of the LB, dominating and enclosing it. The flats would, therefore, detract from the LB's open setting and would diminish its position in the street-scene.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would harm the setting of the adjacent Grade II LB. Consequently, there would be conflict with Policies CS10 of the Wakefield Core Strategy and D9 and D18 of the Wakefield Development Policies Document (DPD) which, in combination, seek to protect and enhance local character and distinctiveness including protecting historic locations.

Highway Safety

8. Twelve car parking spaces would be provided. The Council says that this would be 3 spaces short of their guidelines and that the layout would not provide sufficient manoeuvring space. I agree with the Council in respect of manoeuvring space particularly for space 5 which is very close to the building and to space 7. That said, I note that DPD Policy D14 says that the standards (which are not before me) are maximum levels and not minimum.
9. Even if the parking were to spill out onto Sandal Avenue, I have no convincing evidence that it would actually cause any harm to highway safety. Given that Sandal Avenue is a cul-de-sac and therefore has little traffic, I consider that an overspill would not harm highway safety and therefore I find no conflict with DPD Policy D14 which seeks to ensure the safe and free flow of traffic.

Other Matters

10. I note the appellant's comments that the site is within a sustainable location and that the flats would add to the housing supply but these matters, together with the lack of harm to highway safety, do not outweigh the harm I find to the character and appearance of the area. I also note the representations from neighbours but nothing outweighs the conclusions I have reached.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Siobhan Watson

INSPECTOR