

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by Helen Hockenhull BA(Hons) B.PI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/16/3157817

6 Lawefield Park, Lawefield Lane, Wakefield WF2 8ST

- 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 A-Z Motor Spares against the decision of City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02949/FUL, dated 12 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'extension of unit'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the setting of the neighbouring Westgate Wesleyan Methodist Church, a Grade II listed building.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms a commercial premises located on Lawefield Lane in a mixed use area with commercial and residential uses as well as a primary school. The building is constructed in brick with dark brown metal cladding and has off road parking to the north and south of the premises. It lies next to the Grade II listed Westgate Wesleyan Chapel.
 4. The Chapel, built in 1827, forms a two storey red brick building with painted stone dressing. The building has a basement level and a distinctive front elevation comprising a 5 bay front bowed pediment gable with round headed first floor windows. The building has a small frontage area enclosed by a low brick wall with black railings and stone gate pillars. Land to the southern elevation of the Chapel is at a lower level. It is bounded by the brick front wall on the western boundary and a part brick wall with palisade fence above on the southern site boundary next to the appeal site. This enclosed hard landscaped area to the side of the Chapel contributes to the setting of the listed building. The Chapels historic and architectural features together with its setting contribute to its significance as a heritage asset.
 5. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings change.
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6. I observed in my site visit that when looking north up Lawefield Lane, from a position south of the appeal site, there are only limited views of the side elevation and roof of the listed Chapel. This is due to the siting of neighbouring buildings and the curvature of the road. It is not until one gets closer to the motor spares premises that more of the side elevation comes into view and the building has a strong visual presence in the street scene.
7. The appeal proposes a side extension to the appeal premises to provide additional storage. The extension would be set back from the front elevation of the building and extend to the side boundary fence. The siting and height of the proposed extension would reduce the space between the appeal premises and the Chapel. This would further restrict the views of the listed building which would diminish its presence in the street scene and create a sense of enclosure impacting negatively on its setting and its significance as a heritage asset.
8. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would be recessed back from the front elevation. However because the appeal building and the neighbouring Chapel are sited at an angle as they each follow the bend of the road, the proposed set back would be insufficient to satisfactorily mitigate the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed building.
9. The extension would be constructed in materials matching that of the existing premises. As a result of the proximity of the proposed extension to the Chapel, I consider that these modern materials would visually jar against the traditional materials of the listed building. This would have a further negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset.
10. Paragraph 132 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets as they are irreplaceable and any harm should require clear and convincing justification. In this case I consider that the harm I have identified to the setting of the listed building and the significance of the heritage asset would be notable but less than substantial. Paragraph 134 of the Framework goes on to say that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
11. The proposed extension would provide additional storage for the motor spares business. The appellant has argued that this extra facility is required to support the economic viability of the business and maintain jobs. The planning application form indicated that 2 full time and 2 part time jobs would be created. I consider that whilst this would provide some public benefit, it would not outweigh the harm I have identified to the setting of the listed Chapel and its significance as a designated heritage asset.
12. I conclude that the appeal proposal would adversely affect the setting of the neighbouring listed Chapel. It would therefore conflict with the Framework, Saved Policy CS10 of the Wakefield Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy 2009 and Saved Policies D9 and D18 of the Wakefield LDF Development Policies Document 2009. These policies aim to achieve high quality design and protect historic locations and buildings.

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I dismiss this appeal.

Helen Hockenhull

INSPECTOR