The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE

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

Decision date: 24 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4718/W/16/3165469
Former fish & chip shop/garage, Woodhead Road, Holmbridge, Holmfirth HD9 2NW

- 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 Richard Hallam against the decision of Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The application Ref 2016/62/90914/W, dated 15 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2016.
- The development proposed is a detached single dwelling with integral garage, including demolition of former fish & chip shop and garage.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a former fish and chip shop and garage located on the south side of Woodhead Road. Several blocks of stone built terraced properties are located to the east which have rendered gable ends that have considerably weathered to be a colour that is similar to the stone. The topography rises to the north of the road and the hillside is occupied by a variety of residential properties of varying size, construction ages and design styles but are predominantly constructed of natural stone.

4. A recreation ground is located to the south of the site which forms part of the River Holme valley floor before the land rises the to the south with the hillside also being occupied by a variety of residential properties constructed of a variety of materials.

5. The fish and chip shop is vacated and is in a poor state of repair. Owing to its external walls being painted in a white colour it appears quite prominent in views along the road and from views across the valley to the south, particularly from Dobb Top Road, due to its contrast in colour with the stone material of the neighbouring buildings.

6. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the former fish and chip shop and garage and the construction of detached three storey dwelling. The dwelling would be set behind the boundary wall to Woodhead Road and at a floor level that would be slightly above the ground level of the recreation ground. The lower ground floor would be constructed in regular coursed stone with antique white coloured render to the ground and first floor.

7. I agree with the Council that the scale, mass, position and design of the proposed dwelling would be appropriate. Owing to it being set behind the highway boundary wall and at a lower level than the existing fish and chip shop, I agree that the majority of the proposed dwelling would be barely visible in views along Woodhead Road.

8. However, in views across the valley, particularly from Dobb Top Road and from the recreation ground, I consider that the use of white render would contrast markedly and unacceptably with the stone of the immediate building group and the dwellings to the north. This would result in the proposed dwelling having an unacceptable degree of prominence and appearing at odds with its setting and the character of development in the surrounding area.

9. Whilst I accept that the appeal site is not located within a Conservation Area and that the south side of the valley has dwellings constructed in a variety of materials, the northern side is characterised by buildings where the use of natural stone is both prevalent, dominant and prominent in views and strongly contributes to the character and local identity of this part of Holmbridge. The contrasting use of the render would fail to respect this character and the local identity of the surrounding area.

10. I do not share the appellant's views that the proposed dwelling would integrate harmoniously into the site due to the nature of the banking to Woodhead Road. In my view, the visual backdrop that this banking creates in views from the south is dominated by the preponderance of stone built properties in vistas. Whilst there is some degree of mature vegetation along Dobb Top Road, I observed at my site visit that the appeal site remains quite visible across the valley and the prominence of the existing fish and chip shop in such views reinforces my findings that the use of white render on the ground and first floor of the proposed dwelling would be inappropriate in this location.

11. I therefore conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to Saved Policies BE1 (i) (ii), BE2 (i) and D2 (vi) (vii) of the Kirklees Unitary Development Plan 2007. These policies, amongst other things, require that new development should be in keeping with the surrounding area in respect of materials, contributes to a sense of local identity and does not prejudice the character of the surrounding area.

Other matters

12. I accept that the removal of the garage and fish and chip shop would result in a localised visual improvement. I have also taken into account the modest contribution that the proposed development would make to housing supply. However, I do not consider that these benefits outweigh the harm that would be created to the character and appearance of the area by the use of white render on the proposed external surfaces of the dwelling.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR