
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2017

by R A Exton Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/17/3180486

Land between 33 and 43 Darrington Road, East Hardwick, West Yorkshire WF8 3DS

- 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 S Downham against the decision of City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02322/FUL, dated 19 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as construction of two dwellings on infill land in the centre of the village of East Hardwick.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the setting of St Stephen's church.

Procedural matter

3. During the Council's consideration of the application an alternative scheme proposing 2 bungalows was discussed. The Council have been clear that this scheme did not form part of its formal consideration of the proposal. Consequently, I have not considered the bungalow scheme as part of my assessment of the proposal either.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is situated on the northern side of Darrington Road and forms part of a larger vacant paddock. The paddock forms a break in the frontage development that lines this side of the road. It rises up to the north, affording clear views of St Stephen's church (SSC), which is set at an elevated level.
5. SSC is a distinctive building in the English Gothic style which is visually prominent within the surrounding area. As such, its status as a focal point at the centre of the historic core of the village is readily apparent. Consequently, I agree with the Council's assessment of its status as a non-designated heritage asset.

6. The main unobstructed view of SSC from within the village is across the paddock of which the appeal site forms part. Conversely, when stood within the church yard, the unobstructed view back towards Darrington Road, over the paddock, provides a visual relationship with the village. Construction of the 2 dwellings granted planning permission at the eastern and western ends of the paddock will narrow this view to that gained through the appeal site. As such I consider that the gap formed by the appeal site significantly contributes to the setting of SSC.
7. The proposal would substantially block the view of SSC from Darrington Road. There would be some views of SSC between the proposal and the dwellings with planning permission at the eastern and western ends of the paddock. There would also be views of SSC over the roofs of the proposal, when viewed from the southern side of Darrington Road. However, the established relationship between the setting of SSC and the village would be lost. Permanent loss of this important view would cause significant harm to the setting of SSC as a non-designated heritage asset.
8. I note the appellants comments relating to the assessment of the planning application for dwellings at the eastern and western ends of the site referred to above. From the limited information before me it appears that this proposal retained a view of SSC from Darrington Road and was therefore materially different to the appeal proposal. I have in any case assessed this proposal based on its own merits and the policies and evidence before me. The previous considerations referred to do not lead me to a different conclusion.
9. I also note the appellant's comments relating to possible future planting on the site and the contribution the proposal it would make to housing supply in the district. Whilst views over the site could change through future planting and the proposal would make a limited contribution to boosting the supply of housing in the district, these factors do not outweigh the harm to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset I have identified.
10. In light of the above I conclude that the proposal would conflict with Policy CS10 of the Wakefield MDC Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted 2009 and Policy D9 of the Wakefield MDC Local Development Framework Development Policies Document adopted 2009. These require development proposals to respect key views that contribute to local character. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it relates to promoting a positive strategy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Other matters

11. I note interested parties concerns including those relating to drainage capacity, effect on the Green Belt and highway safety. However, given my conclusion, it is not necessary for me to consider these matters further.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Exton

INSPECTOR