



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2019

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X2410/W/19/3229513

Rectory Field Nursery, Rectory Road, Wanlip, LE7 4PL

- 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 Coulson against the decision of Charnwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/19/0297/2, dated 17 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is one and a half storey office (Class B1) and single storey residential garage extension (Class C3).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are, firstly, the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area and, secondly, whether users of the development would be unduly reliant on private transport.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site fronts onto Rectory Road and is currently used mainly as a parking area. Part of the land to the rear is used as a storage area for mezzanine flooring and the wider site is surrounded by open countryside.
4. The development would introduce a domestic extension and a new office building that would extend up to the road. The side elevation fronting the road would incorporate twin gables, and a combination of angular upper windows with wider narrow windows beneath. Together, these features would result in an awkward asymmetric appearance that would contrast sharply with other nearby domestic properties. This would be exacerbated by the use of large areas of white render on the upper parts of the building which would increase its prominence and incongruity. Moreover, the development would be positioned on the most prominent part of the site and would be clearly visible in views along Rectory Road, particularly from the south. This would result in an unsympathetic feature that would appear out of keeping with its surroundings. Whilst the building would be domestic in scale, and would use some matching materials, that does not alter my other concerns regarding its design.

5. My attention has been drawn to the Palmer-Tomkinson Centre, which is located approximately 150 metres to the south. However, that building is of an entirely different scale and design and is set back significantly from the road. It is also seen in the context of the Cedars Academy complex in which it is located. Its presence does not lend support to the development in my view.
6. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CS 2 of the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and Policy EV/1 of the Charnwood Local Plan (2004) which seek to achieve high quality design that responds positively to its context. It would also be at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') which seeks to ensure that new development is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Private transport

7. The development would extend an existing business that currently operates from land to the rear of the appeal site. In this regard, both Policy CS 10 of the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and the Framework support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. The definition of 'sustainable development' given in the Framework is relatively broad and is not limited solely to considerations of access to public transport, services, and facilities.
8. The Council state that the existing business use, which was granted on appeal in 2009¹, has been significantly expanded without consent. In this regard, the lawfulness of its current extent is unclear. Moreover, from the information before me, it is not clear how many additional employees would be based at the site (including any relocated from elsewhere), or whether the development would attract significantly more deliveries and customers. In these circumstances, it is unclear whether the development would represent a disproportionately large extension to the existing business, or whether it would generate a significant number of additional trips. I am therefore unable to conclude whether there would be any unacceptable effects in this regard. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, this matter is not decisive in this case.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. Whilst it would generate additional economic activity, allow the existing business to expand, and could incorporate some ecological enhancements, that does not alter my view that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/X2410/A/08/2090423