



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2019

by P Wookey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/19/3225136

**Clearways Industrial Estate, Unit 9, London Road, West Kingsdown,
TN15 6ES**

- 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 D Sporeni, Pispo Ltd against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03951/FUL, dated 30 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as new first floor to create office space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - The character and appearance of the area; and,
 - Highways safety, with particular regard to parking provision.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Clearways Industrial Estate, is an estate of twelve relatively small, light industrial units, located in West Kingsdown. Access is taken directly from London Road. Adjacent uses are predominantly residential dwellings developed in a linear fashion along London Road, though there are other light industrial and commercial uses found in a sporadic fashion in either direction along London Road. On the opposite side of the road, is a row of residential dwellings.
4. Unit 9 Clearways Industrial Estate (Unit 9) is the end unit in a row of three which back onto London Road. Other units are developed around a central courtyard with a single point of access and egress to the site immediately adjacent to Unit 9. Parking is provided at the front of each unit in the courtyard area. From London Road the most visible aspects of the Industrial Estate are the rear brick elevations of the units, containing small windows and the enclosed courtyard area glimpsed through the access road between Units 9 and 10. The units, including Unit 9 are all single storey, with flat roofs.

5. The development proposed would add a first-floor extension to the existing single storey building, raising the roof height from approximately 3.7 metres to approximately 5.9 metres. The proposed fenestration, brick façade and roofing materials would match those used in the existing building.
6. The appellant states that the street scene along London Road has no distinctive characteristic or prevailing pattern with the industrial estate breaking the line of residential development when viewed from the other side of the road. However, whilst I acknowledge that the existing single storey height of the units on the Clearway Industrial Estate interrupt the pattern of the residential development, they are an integral part of the existing street scene and due to their single storey height have limited visual impact.
7. This would be significantly and adversely altered with the addition of an extension to the first floor of Unit 9 raising the height of a single unit, which would be wholly at odds with the appearance of the adjacent units. It would not conform to the development's uniform appearance in height or scale, other than the proposed sympathetic use of materials. As a result, it would appear incongruous from all viewpoints within the industrial estate and from London Road and would have a significant detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the wider street scene.
8. I conclude that due to the incongruous appearance of the development proposed and its harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, it would be contrary to Policy SP1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011) (CS) and Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015)(ADMP), which when read together seek to secure high quality design in new development which has respects to the local and distinctive character of its surroundings.

Parking

9. The Council states that Policy T2 of the ADMP would require additional parking spaces to be provided by the development proposed in order to meet the Kent County Council's Highways Supplementary Vehicle Parking (SPG) standards. This would result in an additional 7.5 parking spaces having to be provided. The appellant has submitted no details on how such provision could be met, other than to suggest that there is sufficient on street parking available in a parking bay on the opposite side of London Road, which is located in front of the residential dwellings.
10. Based on my own site visit observations, the area in front of each of the units in the courtyard area were fully utilised and vehicles entering the estate were unable to park safely or without blocking other parked vehicles. The already stressed parking situation would become worse if further B1 floor space was developed and as the appellant has provided no on-site solution this would result in the SPG standards not being met. At the time of my site visit the on-street parking bay on the opposite side of London Road was fully utilised with vehicles indicating that the area already experiences parking stress.
11. Further, the on-street parking bay on the opposite side of London Road to Unit 9 is not in the control of the appellant and could not be managed in such a way to provide adequate parking provision for the development proposed. At the time of my site visit, it was well utilised by parked vehicles. Further, the use of the on-street parking bay, would in my opinion result in pedestrians having to

cross a busy road in an area which has no defined pedestrian crossing points and would endanger their own and other road users safety.

12. The development proposed would result in additional vehicle parking stress for existing tenants, visitors and deliveries to the site in the courtyard area which already experiences parking congestion. Moreover, vehicles not able to enter the site due to congestion would have to back up onto the busy London Road, resulting in a significant adverse effect on highway safety.
13. I conclude that the failure of the development proposed to make adequate parking provision, would increase pressure for on street parking with harmful effects on highways safety and would be contrary to Policy T2 of the ADMP which seeks to ensure new development provides adequate parking in accordance with the SPG.

Other Matters

14. A number of interested parties have a raised concern on matters including noise, lack of public transport, waste storage and disruption during construction if the appeal was allowed. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on the main issues, I have not pursued these matters further.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Paul Wookey

INSPECTOR