
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/W/19/3221631

Roundswell Retail Park, John Penrose Road, Barnstable EX31 3RY

- 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 Canada Life Investments against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 65593, dated 21 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2018.
 - The development proposed is for upgrades to front elevation of retail terrace.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for upgrades to front elevation of retail terrace at Roundswell Retail Park, John Penrose Road, Barnstable EX31 3RY in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 65593, dated 21 September 2018, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 110-01 Revision 02, 210-01 Revision 02, 300-01 Revision 01.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a terrace of retail units built around 25 years ago and is beginning to look dated in its appearance. It is situated within a predominantly commercial area where there is a wide variety of architecture and building forms, consequently there is no clearly discernible design theme to be found within the locality.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') stipulates that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development proposal process should achieve (para 124). I note concern with regard to the introduction of rendered gables and dark coloured flat roof canopies, however there are similar such canopies on other buildings within quite close proximity to the appeal site, and whilst render in itself may

not predominate within the area, nonetheless a significant amount of yellow brick would be retained on the principal elevation of the building. Indeed those retained sections of brick wall between the gable features would actually become more apparent through the omission of the canopy that currently spans the whole width of the building.

5. I note reference to the appearance of the gables, duplicated four times across the building frontage, but these already exist; and the removal of the canopies and other paraphernalia would reduce visual clutter and overall I consider that the proposal would be of a far more contemporary appearance adding value to the character of the A3125 street scene.
6. The Council has not substantiated how the proposal would fail to reinforce the positive economic growth of the retail park, however the implementation of this scheme would demonstrate investment and a commitment to the longer term future of the property to customers, as well as to passers-by.
7. Overall, I find that the proposal would not give rise to demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the area and complies with the Framework which seeks to achieve well designed places and, amongst other things, that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development. In respect of the Development Plan, I consider that the proposal complies with Policies ST04, ST11, ST12 and DM04 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (2018) which seek to achieve high quality, inclusive and sustainable design to support the creation of successful vibrant places, encourage the modernisation of employment sites (notwithstanding that this is for retail development), and require development proposals to be appropriate and sympathetic to the setting in terms of scale, appearance, fenestration and materials in relationship to buildings in the local neighbourhood.

Conclusion and Conditions

8. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.
9. Other than the standard time limit condition, for the avoidance of doubt, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans is also imposed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR