
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2020

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T2405/Z/20/3249988
2 Coventry Road, Narborough LE19 2GR

- 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 Khyati Gosalia against the decision of Blaby District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/1302/FUL, dated 27 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is the installation of security roller shutters to shop frontage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the historic environment with specific regard to i) whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Narborough Conservation Area (NCA); and ii) the setting of grade II listed buildings.

Reasons

3. Located at and spanning the junction of Station Road and Coventry Road, the appeal building is a simple and traditionally proportioned two storey corner building in red brick with a slate roof. It is in a prominent location at the road junction and along with the Narborough Arms and Nos 3 and 5 Leicester Road it forms an attractive street scene of quaint cottage style frontage buildings. In the case of the appeal building and Nos 3 and 5 Leicester Road, these are historic ground floor commercial uses with residential accommodation above. They form the older parts of what appears to be an original village centre. Their proportions, use of traditional layout, detailing and materials mean they make a positive contribution to the NCA.
4. One of the key features of traditional ground floor commercial units is their display windows, usually flanking or one side of an entrance door depending on the size of the building and topped with a header sign of some kind. The appeal building has two pairs of ground floor display windows on two street facing elevations. Their size makes them prominent features of each. The use of features such as decorative bullseye style glass sections and narrow horizontal and vertical glazing bars emphasise their traditional quality.
5. As part of my site visit, I noticed that the windows facing Station Road have been painted over. Some of their appeal and contribution to the street scene

has therefore been eroded. That said, one can still appreciate their design, shape, glazing detail and proportions. The addition of roller shutters to the exterior of the building would, when closed, obscure a significant and prominent element of the building's external appearance as well as leading to an inactive or 'dead' frontage to more than one street scene. In addition, the boxes mounted above each window would be bulky and ungainly, detracting from the windows as a feature of each elevation. Furthermore, I feel that overall the style and design of the shutters would be overly modern for the more traditional features of the building. Taking all of these matters into account, the proposed development would be harmful to the visual qualities of the NCA.

6. The appeal building is not listed albeit is a prominent part of a street scene that includes both the Narborough Arms and No 5 Leicester Road which are both grade II. The historic use, traditional shape, proportions and situation of the appeal building forms part of the setting of these buildings. The Narborough Arms is a substantial complex of two storey and single storey adjoined buildings, two of which sit alongside and attached to the appeal building, facing Coventry Road. No 5 Leicester Road is separated by Station Road but also relates to the appeal building and the Narborough Arms by virtue of its historic use and simple, traditional design and frontage features. The addition of what I have described as an overly modern external feature to the appeal building would stand out in this street scene of largely intact historic examples of their type and function. They would reduce the aesthetic quality of the street scene in that respect and as a consequence cause harm to the setting of the aforementioned listed buildings.
7. The harms I have identified to both the NCA and the setting of the grade II listed buildings would, given the scale of the proposed development, be less than substantial. As such, and in accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework¹, I am required to balance it against the public benefits of the proposals. I can see from the appellant's case that the main driver for the installation of the shutters is security. The appellant has cited a number of instances of crime at the appeal site and I agree that shutters would be a visible deterrent to potential break ins or criminal damage. Designing out crime and the potential for discouraging activity associated with it is clearly a benefit to the public. However, the appellant has provided limited detail as to what other security measures have been explored, such as internal shutters, and specifically why they were discounted in favour of the external design. I can therefore attach only limited weight to the need for the shutters on security grounds. This would be accordingly placed alongside the substantial weight I would attach to the multiple harms I have found to the historic environment in the shape of the NCA and the setting of two grade II listed buildings, having regard to the 'great weight' the Framework sets out should be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
8. With this in mind, the public benefits of the proposed development would not be sufficient to outweigh the harms I have found. As such, the appeal scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the NCA and adversely affect the setting of both the Narborough Arms and No 5 Leicester Road. This would result in conflict with section 16 of the Framework and

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Policies CS20 of the Core Strategy² and DM12 of the Local Plan³. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that the cultural heritage of the district is preserved and enhanced, and development should seek to avoid harm to the heritage assets of the district.

Other Matters

9. The appellant mentions that there are other buildings in the NCA with external roller shutters although no specific examples are given in the evidence. In any case, each proposal should be considered on its own merits, with regard to its own context. I have done this in regard to the case before me. I am also aware that the external shutters would not be closed during trading hours. Be that as it may, the shutters would be visible for the time they are closed, and this would be sufficient in my mind for them to be harmful. In addition, and when they are open, the box housing atop each window and the shutter framework would remain noticeable. I have explained my objections to these features in my findings.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons I have set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR

² Blaby District Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2013

³ Blaby District Local Plan Delivery Development Plan Document 2019