



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2020

by E Brownless BA (Hons) Solicitor (non-practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Monday, 07 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/20/3248495

Glebe Land, Acorn Street, Hunsdon, Herts SG12 8PA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant consent, agreement or approval to details required by a condition of a planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Hunsdon Parochial Church Council against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: X/19/0362/CND, dated 6 August 2019, sought approval of details pursuant to condition No 3 of a planning permission Ref: 3/12/1440/FP, granted on 4 December 2012.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is New Chapel/community facility including parking.
 - The details for which approval is sought are: external materials (Condition3).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and I approve the details of the roof materials submitted pursuant to Condition 3, attached to planning permission Ref: 3/12/1440/FP, granted on 4 December 2012; in accordance with the application Ref: X/19/0362/CND, dated 6 August 2019.

Procedural Matter

2. A previous application¹ to discharge a number of conditions on the planning permission, including Condition 3, was approved by the Council. Among other things, this included the use of natural slate tiles in the construction of the roof. This appeal seeks to vary the approved roof covering from natural slate tile to a fibre cement roof tile, namely Eternit Garsdale Fibre Cement Slate. In effect, the appeal is seeking approval for the submitted details relating to the roof material.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed material on the character and appearance of the surrounding area with particular regard to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Planning Permission² was granted by the Council on the 4 December 2012, for the development of a new chapel/community facility on the appeal site. The permission was subject to a number of conditions. Condition 3 required the submission of samples of the external materials to be used in the construction

¹ Planning Reference: X/15/0282/CND

² Planning Ref: 3/12/1440/FP

of the building, prior to any building work being commenced. The reason for imposing the condition was stated to be '*in the interests of the appearance of the development and in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (2007)*'.

5. The appeal site is a roughly rectangular parcel of land located towards the northern corner of the existing recreational grounds. To its front, mature hedgerow separates the appeal site from the highway and its northern boundary sits adjacent to existing dwellings. The southern and rear boundaries are presently open to the recreational grounds. Beyond these, the area is predominantly bounded by residential development.
6. The appeal site sits outside of the defined boundary for the Hunsdon Conservation Area (CA), albeit it is positioned immediately adjacent to it. The special character of Hunsdon is derived from its architectural and historic identity. In particular, the high quality and tightly knit groupings of listed buildings on the High Street contribute a visually rich character that appears clearly defined and visually separate from the modern developments that surround it.
7. Built form surrounding the appeal site is generally varied and modern, being 20th century development. Roof structures typically consist of plain tiles. By reason of the proposed public use of the appeal building together with the significant height of the roof structure, the appeal scheme would be highly visible from the public realm and neighbouring dwellings and their gardens.
8. I accept that a mass-produced cement tile will lack the individual subtle qualities of a naturally occurring product. However, there are similarities between the approved natural slate and the proposed Eternit Garsdale Fibre Cement slate. In particular, the proposed roof material features a detailed surface, a square edge and a similar colour. Accordingly, whilst I consider that a scheme inclusive of natural slate roof tiles would have been desirable, I find that overall, the use of Eternit Garsdale Fibre Cement Slate roof tiles would be an appropriate material in the construction of the new chapel/community facility. The proposed roof material would not appear inappropriate to the appeal building, and moreover, it would preserve the setting of the CA. Thus, the proposal would accord with LP Policy ENV1 insofar as it requires development to be of a high-quality design that reflects local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

9. Reference has been made by the Council to steps they undertook during consideration of the application, advice given by a duty officer and a site visit. However, these are not matters that I have needed to assess in the determination of this appeal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

E Brownless

INSPECTOR