



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 2 December 2020

By M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1825/W/20/3257565

1 Alcester Street, Redditch B98 8AE

- 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 S Coley against the decision of Redditch Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00453/FUL, dated 15 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing storage building and construction of new storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the revised drawings on which the Council based its decision which related to a replacement storage building of the same dimensions as the existing storage building.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Church Green Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The significance of the CA predominantly relates to the layout of the streets and the high-quality traditional architecture of many of the buildings which are focussed around the Church of St Stephen and the open amenity space which surrounds it. The appeal site is located to the rear of No 1 Alcester Street which along with neighbouring buildings is situated within the CA. The primary elements of the CA that define its significance are less perceptible to the rear of these buildings. However, where rear projections and outbuildings are of a more traditional form and pallet of materials, this reinforces appreciation of the historical development of the area and adds to the significance of the CA.
5. The existing building that would be replaced is of simple metal frame construction with corrugated metal cladding to its external facades. The industrial and utilitarian appearance of the building does not complement the prevailing traditional attributes of the CA. This is prominent in views towards the CA from Wellington Street and the neighbouring car parks. The detracting impact of the building is also appreciable from public vantage points within the

- CA including from Peakman Street as well as from the rear windows of neighbouring buildings in the CA. As a result, the existing building makes a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. The replacement storage building would be of the same size and shape as the building that it would replace. Dark grey profiled metal sheeting would be utilised on the elevations and mono-pitched roof. Consequently, the scale of the building and the visual quality of the materials would be comparable to the existing building. As a result, the development would similarly fail to positively reflect its position next to the other buildings in the CA which generally compose of buildings in higher quality traditional materials. The detrimental effect of the development would be appreciable from the same views in, out and within the CA from which the existing building is seen.
 7. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Paragraph 194 of the Framework states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
 8. Having regard to the specific position of the development relative to the wider context of the CA and its relatively small scale, the development would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA. Paragraph 196 of the Framework states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
 9. There would be modest investment in the CA through the provision of the new more secure building. This in turn has the potential to reduce problems that have previously been associated with the building including rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour. The building would also be of a better visual condition than the building that it would replace. However, this does not mean that the composition of the building would preserve or enhance the prevailing characteristics of the CA. Overall, I am not persuaded that these factors amount to public benefits which would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the CA and the great weight I must attach to its conservation.
 10. I conclude, the development would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In that regard, the development would conflict with the parts that require high quality design and which seek to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in Policies 36, 38 and 40 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (2017) and the Framework.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR