



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2020

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/20/3249423

Land adjacent to 2 The Coach House, New Road, Princes Risborough HP27 0JN

- 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 Louis Catlett against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/07586/FUL, dated 26 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of new two storey detached, two bedroomed dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. On 1 April 2020 Wycombe District Council, the council who originally determined the planning application merged with a number of other local planning authorities into Buckinghamshire Council. For the purposes of this appeal the development plan remains in place for the area.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Princes Risborough Conservation Area (CA); and
 - The effect of the proposal upon surface water drainage.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site forms part of a car park serving a commercial unit fronting High Street and neighbours an existing dwelling. There are a number of nearby buildings located to the rear of properties fronting the High Street. The buildings tend to be modern and vary in terms of scale, form and appearance. These buildings, extensive hard surfacing and modern boundary treatments have eroded the historic character along New Road, although the extent of historic burgage plots is still recognisable.

5. The CA has a classic market town layout and surviving burgage plots remain distinguishable. It is mainly defined by historic buildings of a domestic scale constructed from red brick and tile or slate roofs.
6. Given the varied character of the area I am satisfied that a detached or contemporary building would not look out of place. However, the proposed development in terms of its design and form including the cream rendered appearance and window detailing would jar with surrounding buildings and their red brick appearance failing to successfully integrate into the area. As such, it would appear as an incongruous feature undermining the character of the burgage plot and the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies DM31 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) (LP) which, amongst other things, requires all development to conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment; improve the character of the area and the way it functions; create positive and attractive buildings and spaces and demonstrate attractive and high quality design.
8. In my judgement the impact on the CA would be harmful. Whilst the harm I have identified would not result in substantial harm, it would still result in harm that requires clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate securing its optimum use.
9. The proposed development would contribute to local housing supply, but this benefit would be modest given its small scale. I therefore afford this benefit limited weight. Taking into consideration the points above the harm to the CA would clearly outweigh the public benefits of the proposal.

Surface water drainage

10. I acknowledge that the proposed development is small scale and the site is not within a flood plain. However, it is likely to affect surface water drainage in the area and the surface material of the car park would not be a reliable method of drainage.
11. The appellant has undertaken a Sustainable urban Drainage Scheme (SuDS) assessment. However, the Lead Local Flood Authority contend that the submitted information lacks sufficient detail including that no ground investigations have been undertaken to establish the high groundwater flood risk and whether infiltration is possible. They also raise concerns regarding the location and depth of the proposed deep borehole soakaway.
12. The lack of engagement between the Council, Building Regulations and the appellant's consultants is not a matter for me in this appeal.
13. Based on the evidence before me I am not satisfied that the proposed development would adequately reduce the risk of surface water flooding. As such it would be contrary to Policy DM39 of the LP which, amongst other things, requires developments to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding and to incorporate SuDS ensuring that there is no material increase in run off rates.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above the appeal does not succeed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR