



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2022

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/22/3296359

Heathfield House, Hurdles Way, Thriplow, Duxford, CB22 4PA

- 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 Heathfield House Cambridge Ltd & Alchemie against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00489/FUL, dated 28 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of five air conditioning units within plant compounds for a/c units providing noise mitigation and painting of flues matt black.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of five air conditioning units within plant compounds for a/c units providing noise mitigation and painting of flues matt black at Heathfield House, Hurdles Way, Thriplow, Duxford, CB22 4PA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00489/FUL, dated 28 January 2022 subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have omitted references to retrospective from the description of development as this is not an act of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The air conditioning units are located to either side of the building. The units facing onto Hurdles Way are visible in the street scene behind the wire fence to the site boundary. There is some landscaping on the grass verge alongside Hurdles Way, but this does not wholly screen the units from view.
5. However, given the presence of the fence and landscaped verge, the units are not prominently visible in the street scene. The proposed compound would be finished in a wrap that would appear similar to the brick exterior of the building. Given the relatively small footprint and height of the compound, it would not appear unduly prominent in the street scene and would provide acceptable screening of the units.
6. The units on that side of the building facing the car park are not prominent in the wider area, as this location is set back from the road with the car park

between the site of the units and the street. These units result in negligible impact on the character and appearance of the area, and the proposed compound would provide further screening.

7. The Council has expressed concern regarding the potential for the proposed wraps to the compounds to weather poorly. However, there is no evidence that this would be the case, and subject to approval of details of the wrap via a suitably worded condition I am satisfied that it would weather well with no harmful degradation in appearance.
8. The Council does not consider that the painting of the flues would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Given their relatively small size and limited visual presence, I agree with this conclusion.
9. The proposed development would therefore not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would accord with Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, and guidance in the District Design Guide 2010. Taken together these seek that new development be of high-quality design that preserves or enhances the local urban area.

Other Matters

10. I note that residents also object to the development on grounds of operational noise from the air conditioning units. The Council did not refuse permission for the development on these grounds, and the Environmental Health consultee has stated that the development would be acceptable subject to conditions. During my site visit noise from the units was audible at the site boundary with houses backing onto the site, and on the pavement in front of those houses facing the site. However, the volume was not so great that I consider it would cause unacceptable harm to neighbours, subject to an appropriately worded condition.

Conditions

11. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council, and national Planning Practice Guidance.
12. I have imposed conditions relating to the commencement of development (1) and specifying the approved plans for the sake of certainty (2). In addition, to ensure that the final appearance of the compounds is acceptable and that the wraps would not be subject to degradation I have imposed a condition requiring compliance with the submitted details of their appearance (3). Finally, a condition requiring that the air conditioning units comply with the submitted noise mitigation measures will ensure that their operation does not cause undue disturbance to the living conditions of neighbouring residents (4).

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, the appeal succeeds.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 001 Revision B, A-001 and A-002.
3. Prior to the installation of the compounds hereby approved, details of the materials to be used in the external wrap shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the local planning authority. The compounds shall be finished in accordance with the agreed materials within 3 months of installation on site, and thereafter retained as approved.
4. The development shall be operated in strict accordance with the noise mitigation measures listed in the Noise Impact Assessment for Retrospective Planning Application External Fixed Plant Units, Heathfield House, Duxford (Ref NIA/10142/22/10263/v1/Heathfield House and dated 28th January 2022) prepared by Environmental Noise Solutions Ltd and submitted with the application.

End of schedule