



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2023

by Mr R Walker BA HONS DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N2739/W/22/3310110

Library, 8 Station Road, Tadcaster LS24 9JG

- 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 Michael Clark against the decision of Selby District Council.
- The application Ref 2020/1378/FUL, dated 8 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2022.
- The development proposed is to replace the existing windows with PVCu.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Tadcaster Conservation Area (CA), including the effect of the proposed development on the host property, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

Reasons

3. Tadcaster is a small market town dominated by local breweries and their associated buildings. This relationship between the brewery buildings and the town contributes to the special historical and architectural interest of the CA. Station Road, where the appeal site is located, is close to the town centre and toward the edge of the CA. It is characterised by a mixture of residential and commercial premises, predominantly two-storey in scale, but with a mixture of architectural styles.
4. The library forms part of a large Victorian building, which also includes a residential property and school. Although not formally recorded on a local list, the Council confirm that the building is identified as a landmark building within the associated draft CA Appraisal. I am therefore satisfied that it constitutes a NDHA for the purposes of paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
5. The historic core of the building and its period design features including, amongst other things, decorative ridge tiles, chimney stacks and detailing along the eaves, remain legible and positively contribute to the significance of the NDHA resulting from its Victorian vernacular. The building is in a prominent position along the road, and due to its long frontage, its architectural interest makes a particularly positive contribution to this part of the CA.
6. Part of its interest lies in its window pattern, which includes stone mullioned windows with a strong narrow vertical emphasis. The school part of the building

has been altered with PVCu windows. These have an artificial texture and a more uniform finish than the existing painted timber windows at the library and residential property. Moreover, they have strikingly thick frames with less glass than the equivalent remaining timber framed windows in the building.

7. In this regard, the existing PVCu windows do not sit comfortably between the stone mullions in the narrow openings and detract from the overall appearance of the building. In replicating these existing detracting features within the public area of the library, the proposed development would further erode the Victorian vernacular of the host building and its positive contribution within the CA.
8. There is a mixture of timber and PVCu windows on buildings within the road. I have no firm details of the circumstances that led to this situation. Nonetheless, the appeal building is a distinctive landmark building, and its architectural vernacular can be distinguished from other nearby residential or commercial premises.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the CA and would have a harmful effect on the host property as a NDHA. The harm to the CA means there would be conflict with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
10. The harm to the CA would be localised along this part of the road and from the alterations to the front windows. As such, the effects would be less than substantial in the context of paragraph 202 of the Framework. The harm carries significant importance and weight, and the Framework identifies that great weight should be given to designated assets' conservation. Therefore, although the harm to the CA would be localised, this nevertheless carries considerable importance and weight.
11. I therefore find conflict with the requirements of Policies ENV1 and ENV25 of the Selby District Local Plan (2005), Policies SP18 and SP19 of the Selby District Core Strategy (2013) and the provisions of the Framework, when taken together and insofar as they relate to this matter. These, amongst other things, say that proposals for all new development will be expected to contribute to enhancing community cohesion by achieving high quality design and have regard to the local character, identity and context of its surroundings including historic townscapes, settlement patterns and the open countryside.
12. In accordance with paragraph 202, I must balance the less than substantial harm to the CA against the public benefits of the development. The Framework's approach, set down in paragraph 203, to the harm to the NDHA's significance is that it is considered with a balanced judgement made. This is a distinct approach to that of the effect on designated heritage assets, such as CAs.
13. The library is a community facility providing public benefits. The proposed PVCu windows would have increased thermal performance, be cheaper to install and maintain than replacement timber windows. The increased thermal performance would improve the quality of the offering to users of the library, making it a more comfortable place to spend time. Considering the current cost of energy, and the environmental benefits, these public benefits carry a high degree of weight.

14. The appellant advises that the costs would be approximately 3-5 times more expensive than replacing with timber. However, I do not have full details of the costs, the improved thermal performance, or the extent that alternative options have been considered. The absence of full details in this regard, moderates the weight I afford these public benefits.
15. As such, the public benefits do not, individually or cumulatively, outweigh the great weight given to the conservation of the CA and the consequent conflict with the Act. Moreover, the harm to the NDHA would, in my balanced judgement, be unacceptable, notwithstanding the benefits of the proposal.
16. Full details of the circumstances surrounding the process involved at the Riley-Smith Hall are not before me. They do not alter, my statutory duty under the Act or my assessment of the effects of the proposed development.
17. Overall, I find there to be no material considerations that would indicate that the appeal decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.
18. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR