



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2023

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/W/22/3311517

Land adjacent to 11-13 Scarrotts Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1JD

- 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 P Dempsey, Dempsey Property Ltd against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01270/FUL, dated 17 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is two houses (semi-detached).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellant submitted revised plans¹ as part of the appeal removing the second-floor accommodation and associated dormer windows and introducing shop front features on the ground floor. In this instance no interested party would be prejudiced by taking these amended plans into account and the appeal has accordingly been determined on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene including the effect on the Newport Conservation Area (CA). Two further reasons for refusal relating to the lack of financial contributions towards the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy and the provision of affordable housing have been overcome to the satisfaction of the Council by the submission of a Section 106 planning obligation dated 22 May 2023.

Reasons

4. The proposal is for a pair of semi-detached houses on a vacant site on the south side of Scarrotts Lane, a narrow lane leading from St James Street within the historic town centre character area of the Newport CA. On either side of the lane are a mixture of commercial and some residential uses with small-scale workshops, warehouse buildings, shopfronts, flats and terraced houses. Immediately opposite lies Gray's Walk, a 2½ storey retail/office scheme linking Scarrotts Lane with Pyle Street. The CA appraisal states that Scarrotts Lane is distinct in that it is characterised by small scale workshops and warehouse buildings associated historically with many slaughter houses, the ground floors of which are mainly shop fronts.

¹ Drawing no. 20-820-02 Rev A

5. There is no dispute that the site is suitable for a pair of dwellings, however the Council object to the detailed design of the proposal including the siting of the building and the materials to be used.
6. In relation to siting, whilst the lane is characterised by buildings hard up to the street, the pair of dwellings would only be set back slightly behind a paved area with bollards and rather less than the set back of Gray's Walk opposite. Some residential properties further west are set back slightly and the nearby three dwelling scheme approved under reference P/00185/18 also includes a slight set back behind black painted wrought iron railings. The proposal would not therefore significantly detract from the character of the lane in this respect. In addition, whilst the dwellings would be rendered in contrast to many nearby buildings which are of brick, this is also the case with some other buildings in the CA and not in itself sufficient reason to withhold permission.
7. However, the proposed design would comprise an unimaginative pair of semi-detached houses with pastiche shop front features on the front elevation to give the impression of converted buildings. The semi-detached houses would not appear out of place in a suburban housing estate whilst the shop front features would be a misguided attempt to reflect inserted shopfronts in nearby buildings which primarily relate to warehouse or workshop buildings, not residential dwellings. Removing the second-floor dormer windows reduces the scale of the dwellings but does not improve their design. The proposal would not match the design standard of the approved three dwelling scheme which reflects warehouse architecture with full height gables fronting the lane and timber weatherboarded elevations. Part of the housing scheme at the western end of the lane also uses a 1½ storey approach with gabled dormers and weatherboarding to reflect the scale and historic nature of many nearby buildings in the CA. These schemes set a relatively high design standard which the proposal fails to reach.
8. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the street scene and the Newport CA of which it forms part. The proposal would conflict with Policies DM2 and DM11 of the Isle of Wight Core Strategy 2012 which require high quality design in order to protect, preserve and enhance the existing environment, and expect proposals to complement the character of the surrounding area, especially the historic and built environment in CAs as defined in their appraisal. The proposal would also conflict with the legislative duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA.

Conclusion

9. The proposal would provide two additional dwellings which would make a useful contribution to local housing needs and have economic and social benefits for the town, particularly as the Council cannot demonstrate five years housing land supply. However, these benefits are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the avoidable adverse impact that the design would cause to the character and appearance of the street scene and the Newport CA. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR