



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2023

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/W/23/3318349

**S & R Interiors Ltd, Littlemead Business Centre, Tangmere Road,
Tangmere, West Sussex PO20 2EU**

- 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 Samuel Doran of S and R Interiors Ltd against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref O/22/01003/FUL, dated 8 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension employing class uses E(g)(iii) and B8 ground floor with ancillary offices on first floor mezzanine E(g)(i) plus PV to roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal submission included an additional plan, 20/1410 PL R409, and a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA). These documents do not physically alter the proposed development but seek to clarify elements of that proposed and respond to the reasons for refusal. Interested parties have had the opportunity to comment on them, so I am content that no parties would be unfairly disadvantaged by my acceptance of the plan and NIA.

Background and Main Issue

3. Part of the Littlemead Business Centre (LBC) adjacent to the appeal site was the subject of appeal APP/L3815/W/22/3294952. However as appeal 3294952 was dismissed, the Council no longer consider the cumulative effect of it and the proposed development as relevant. I am accordingly aware of appeal 3294952 but have dealt with the proposal before me on its own merits.
4. The Council also consider the submitted plan and NIA to adequately demonstrate that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties in relation to noise, and would be able to provide adequate parking, subject to relevant conditions. The Council no longer wish to contest these points and there are no other objections pertaining to them before me.
5. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building and its setting.

Reasons

6. The appeal site forms part of the LBC which is a former school site. The main building on the LBC is 'Woodfield House' a large, white, 2 storey building with a

flat roofed, 2 storey, brick wing to the rear. To the side and rear of Woodfield House is a series of lower buildings which create a broadly L shaped layout and provide commercial space with some residential units to one end. Parallel to the rear range of commercial units and to the rear of Woodfield House is the appeal site.

7. Notwithstanding the formalised parking adjacent to the existing buildings, the rest of the LBC to the rear of the appeal site is laid to gravel. This is currently used for the parking of further vehicles and the siting of some storage containers and portacabins. It is acknowledged that the gravelled area and its use is under review by the Council since the dismissal of appeal 3294952.
8. The LBC is situated on Tangmere Road between the village of Tangmere and Shopwyke. It is located within the countryside and surrounded by flat farmland. This means the rear section of the LBC, including the appeal site, forms part of the extended views from the surrounding area, specifically Drayton Lane. Although it is acknowledged that mature field boundaries and slight undulations in the land provide some screening.
9. The appeal site contains a detached, single storey rectangular commercial building. It is functional in form and although one bay is taller, provides a uniformity in roof shape and rectilinear footprint. Its simplicity lends itself to its location at the edge of the LBC and consequently it blends in reasonably well with its surroundings. This means when viewed from Drayton Road it fades into the background and does not visually compete with Woodfield House.
10. Policies 45 and 46 of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 (LP) control alterations to existing buildings and general development in the countryside. Amongst other things, they require development to relate well to an existing group of buildings; be in keeping with its surroundings in terms of form, bulk, and general design; and have minimal impact on the landscape and rural character of the area.
11. The proposal would constitute an extension to the appeal building, so in spatial terms would be reasonably well related to the existing group of buildings which constitute the LBC. However, the proposed extension would not relate well visually to the appeal building as it would be wider and obviously taller. This would have a dominating effect and overly complicate an otherwise simple rectilinear form. The proposed mono-pitch roof would not assimilate with the existing low-pitched roof so would create a visually awkward relationship between the existing and proposed.
12. In effect the proposal would introduce another element to the appeal building creating an overly complicated and non-cohesive unit when viewed as a whole. This would be at odds to the simple form of the other commercial units within the LBC. Its bulk and height would visually compete with Woodfield House when viewed from a distance, specifically Drayton Lane. This increase in built volume would also contribute to the increased visual intrusion of the LBC, to which it is inextricably linked, into the otherwise rural landscape.
13. It is acknowledged the proposal would provide much needed space for the appellant's expanding business and would remove the need for informal and temporary storage around the appeal building, however the overall bulk and form of the proposal is not in keeping with the host building. It would create an

unduly dominant feature within the LBC and would have more than a minimal impact on the landscape and rural character of the area.

14. That other buildings on the LBC may be considered utilitarian with varying additions and a mix of roof forms is noted. Nevertheless, suboptimal correlation of design elements elsewhere is not a justification for the continuation of such practices.
15. It is also not disputed that the proposal would support an existing viable and ongoing employment use within the countryside. That it would also be designed to accord with the construction criteria set out in LP Policy 40 and would include PV panels and electric vehicle charge points is equally commendable. However, these do not negate the harm identified.
16. Consequently, I find the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal building and its setting. It would fail to comply with LP Policies 45 and 46; and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as far as it seeks new development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons above the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and there are no sufficiently weighted material considerations, including the Framework, which would indicate a decision otherwise. The appeal is, therefore, dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR