
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2024

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W0734/W/24/3346837

**St Edwards Roman Catholic Primary School, Eastbourne Road,
Middlesbrough TS5 6QS**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr St Edwards Primary School (Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust) against the decision of Middlesbrough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/0416/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “demolish existing vacant caretakers house and install two new classrooms in its place”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to demolish caretakers house and install two new classrooms at St Edwards Roman Catholic Primary School, Eastbourne Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6QS in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/0416/FUL, and the plans submitted with it: Site Location Plan; Proposed Plans 03; Existing - Proposed Block Plans 04; Proposed Elevations 05.

Preliminary Matters

2. The development subject to this appeal has already taken place, so I am considering the proposal retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Linthorpe Conservation Area and its effect on the setting of a neighbouring locally listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is within the Linthorpe Conservation Area (the LCA), the significance of which is partly derived from its village origins which have grown into high quality late nineteenth and early twentieth century suburbs with areas of planned architectural consistency.
5. Eastbourne Road lies at the eastern periphery of the LCA. The northern side of the road is typical of much of the LCA with traditional two-storey houses, set back from the road with front gardens generally defined by low brick walls

with large gate piers, hedges, and some mature trees. The buildings are predominantly brick with pitched slate roofs, although some have been rendered or painted.

6. The southern side of the road has a more varied character and includes St Edwards RC Primary School and the Holy Name of Mary Church. The Church is a large brick building of Romanesque design. It is a prominent landmark feature with historical, architectural, and liturgical interest, warranting its status as a locally listed building. In contrast, the adjacent primary school buildings range in age, size, and appearance. Most are constructed in brick with flat roofs, but render and timber cladding also feature prominently. The LCA Appraisal and Management Plan (2006) states that the school buildings are of no particular significance. While it does not specifically mention the now-demolished caretakers house, it is common ground between the parties that this two-storey flat-roofed building from the 1970s was a negative feature, and so its loss has not been contested. The Council's officer report further states that the appeal site is "*the lowest value site to the locally listed buildings and has limited setting or prominence*". I see no reason to disagree with these views.
7. The new classroom building is a low-slung, single-storey, timber-clad structure with a simple form. Although it has a greater footprint than the former caretakers house, it is lower in height and clearly subordinate to the much larger surrounding buildings it is seen with and against. It does not visually obscure or reduce the prominence of the neighbouring Church, and if anything, has improved visibility of the distinctive crucifix detail on the eastern gable of the Church. While it does project closer to the road, ample separation is still maintained from the front boundary and I do not consider that the school buildings form part of the defined building line with the houses to the east given their very different character and the extent of the school frontage. As such, the development has not harmfully prejudiced any important building line consideration.
8. In terms of the external materials used, the timber cladding reflects elements of the existing school buildings and, in my view, is a complementary material that does not look out of place and unsympathetic in this location. Moreover, it helps to further emphasise the subordination of the development, and given time, will naturally weather to a more subdued colour. The dark grey window frames are appropriate to the style and materials of the building and similar to those already present in other modern buildings at the school. In any event, the windows are barely noticeable from outside the site due to the surrounding fencing. This will be even more so once the new landscaping in front of the building matures.
9. Overall, while the development represents a change to the appeal site, I find that it is not a harmful addition to the street scene and in relation to the neighbouring locally listed building and the LCA as a whole.
10. I therefore conclude that the character and appearance of the LCA, and the setting of the nearby locally listed building, have been preserved. Thus, the proposal complies with statutory requirements¹ and the design and heritage protection objectives of Policies DC1, CS4, and CS5 of the Middlesbrough Core

¹ Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Strategy (2008). For the same reasons, it also complies with sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

11. As the development has already taken place, no planning conditions are necessary.

Conclusion

12. The development complies with statutory requirements, the Framework, and the relevant policies of the development plan for the area. Therefore, the appeal should be allowed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR