
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2015

by Simon Hand MA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 24 March 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/14/3000631

Ladbrokes, 6 Market Place, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5BD

- 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 Market Place Newbury Limited against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 14/01955/FULD, dated 29 July 2014, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2014.
 - The development proposed is erect third floor containing two 2xbed flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Newbury Conservation Area and the setting of the listed Corn Exchange.

Reasons

3. No 6 Market Place is a large modern office building on the southern corner of Newbury Market Place. It houses a betting office on the ground floor and the upper two floors either have been or will be converted into flats. The proposal is to add a fourth floor on the roof with two more flats.
4. The building is in a prominent corner location and is highly visible from within the market place looking out and from the south looking towards the market place. From within the market place looking south the listed Corn Exchange, with its neo-classical façade has a significant presence which stands out despite the negative effects of the appeal building. In the context of this appeal this defines its significance. Looking into the market place the character of the Conservation Area is made up of the variety of attractive buildings arranged around its perimeter.
5. In this context the appeal building, described as “quasi-brutalist” by the appellant, appears in my view, as a strikingly ugly building. The proposed extra floor would be set back from the edge so from close to would not be particularly visible from the street, but it would be clearly seen in longer views.
6. The appellant argues it would help assimilate the existing stair tower, which sticks up above the roof level. While this is true, the stair tower is most intrusive in views from the rear, from where the impact of the building as a

whole is limited. The stair tower either cannot be seen from the market place or, from the south, is less prominent due to its monopitched roof. Reducing its impact would not therefore be greatly positive. The appellant also argues that the building is too low to successfully turn the corner and the extension would help break up its stark lines.

7. Ordinarily a taller building on the corner, especially one acting as a gateway to the market place could be of benefit. However, in my view the current building is so awful that anything that draws attention to it should be avoided. At least at present in views it is lower than the Corn Exchange which remains the dominant building of this end of the market place. To increase the height of the appeal building would add to its prominence and detract from the setting of the Corn Exchange. From the south when seen, for example from the vicinity of the post office, the long side of the appeal building is prominent in views towards the market place and again increasing that prominence and drawing attention to it by adding an extra floor would serve to increase its already harmful impact on the Conservation Area.
8. The much taller and even uglier telephone exchange building does not define the character of the area. It can be seen from the far north of the market place, from where it appears taller than either the Corn Exchange or the appeal building, but it is considerably further away and does not intrude into the setting of the Corn Exchange in the same way as the appeal building. From the south it is not visible in most views. Nor do I think that the Parkway buildings set a precedent. They were part of a larger redevelopment scheme, and in any event do not have the particular relationship the appeal building does to the market place.
9. Taking this all together I consider the proposal is harmful to the setting of the Corn Exchange and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Although the harm is less than substantial I do not think there are any positive benefits sufficient to outweigh it. The proposal is contrary to policy CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006) which seeks to protect the historic environment to encourage good design and to the NPPF, paragraphs 126 to 141.
10. Because I am refusing planning permission I do not need to consider the issue of the s106 obligation.

Simon Hand

Inspector

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