

Application No. APP/11/01157/CAC & /01203

Address: 10A, The Pallant, Havant

COMMENTS

I have previously made comments on proposals for this site under cover of applications (1) APP/11/01157/CAC & /11/01203 (same proposal) – WITHDRAWN

(2) APP/12/00216 and 12/00239/CAC (similar proposal) – NOT PROCEEDED WITH

(3) More recently APP/14/00504 (Refused).

Applications (1) & (2) were supported by a clear Design & Access Statement which demonstrated an understanding of the context within the proposal is set and the prevailing character of the area. It fed through into a design which produced three residential units (now 4) with a design which showed empathy with the character of the area. Care was taken to provide active street frontages, to break down the scale of the building through the articulation of the elevations. The front elevation was well detailed so as to dovetail into the street and provide a positive enhancement. Accordingly I was able to offer my support. With careful attention to detail it offered the potential to enhance the conservation area and broader setting for nearby listed buildings.

The current and immediately proceeding applications (2) & (3), although for the same applicant fail to pick up and build on this sound framework. In fact it ignores many of the valid assertions made in the initial Design & Access Statement.

... Any new development has to respect the context of its location and a decision made to provide a bold contrast to that which it adjoins or to find a sympathetic visual relationship. In this case the proximity of listed buildings i.e nos 10 & 11 The Plant requires a design that respects both the style and proximity of these buildings. The design proposal aims to respect the architectural qualities of Havant itself with its typical streetscape characterised by a variety of building styles, sizes and materials.

... The proposed new development seeks to provide a natural continuation of the street scene providing modest accommodation Not wishing to be over elaborate the building takes a simpler form using variation in ridge height and structural change in materials to provide variation and interest, although it is not appropriate to compete with the listed buildings or copy too much detail but be sympathetic to the general character. Quality natural materials are essential to provide continuity of pattern, texture and colour so essentially a stock brick with the character of local bricks and plain tiles to be employed.

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This was carried through into the submission drawings which were more informative with annotated notes to clarify the approach.

The Current Proposal

There is more than one way to design a sympathetic infill development which positively contributes to the visual appearance. The earlier proposals are nevertheless a good starting point and serve as a useful model towards a more acceptable design approach. There is no contention that the site is in need of redevelopment and the opportunity this presents to enhance the site and contribute more broadly to regeneration of the conservation area and town centre. The issue is the design of the replacement building.

The proposals contained in the last application and the present proposals fail to deliver the required design quality. It is lacking in the design fundamentals which differentiate a collection of elements from a cohesive design solution where scale, proportion, massing and articulation are used to create a more imaginative whole. This is apparent throughout the scheme, but a good illustration is the treatment of the front elevation and entrance.

The entrance to the street and approach for residents is via a refuse store! Taken as a whole and in detail it fails:-

- to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area
- is of clearly poor design visually and functionally.

On both fronts it fails to meet national and local policy guidance, for which I have set out some of the key passages in Annex 1.

A significant influence appears to be the desire to consider the site in isolation and avoid the participation of adjoining landowners. Given the tight plot, practical implementation needs the parties to be engaged. This is a private matter between landowners, the public interest lays in how such constraints translate into the design. Site ownership constraints are not justification to accept a poor design.

Conclusion

REFUSE

The submitted scheme fails to consider adequately the context within which the site sits resulting in a weak and poorly considered design solution. The proposals fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, or deliver an adequate design solution which meets the tests set out in national guidance (NPPF, National Planning Guidance, extant Practice Guide to PPS.5) and the provisions of Local Plan Policy CS.16.

John Townsend
Conservation Consultant
06/02/15

ANNEX 1

Policy Basis

National Guidance

The NPPF places great emphasis on design

8. *Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social **and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.** The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.*

9. *Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):*

- *making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;*
- *moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;⁶*
- ***replacing poor design with better design;***
- ***improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure;** and*
- *widening the choice of high quality homes.*

17. *Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:*

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- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*

7. Requiring good design

56. *The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.*

58. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- and*

● are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

61. *Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.*

64. ***Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.***

More detail is contained in the extant Practice Guide to PPS5 and National Planning Guidance on Design & Conserving and enhancing the historic environment,

Local Policy

Policy CS16 High Quality Design

Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should demonstrate that its design:

1. Responds to, draws inspiration from and respects local context and:
 - a) Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural, historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site;
 - b) Integrates with existing local landscape features, promotes wildlife and biodiversity and/or applies characteristics of the local area into the design of a scheme wherever possible to create variety and interest;
 - c) Uses the characteristics of the locality to help inform the design of the new development including heights, massing, existing buildings lines, plot widths and depths, materials and proportions of windows and doors;
 - d) Is well connected to and integrates with the immediate local area and the wider area by linking to existing pedestrian and cycle routes and encouraging people to use public transport where possible; and
 - e) The development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours through smell, the loss of privacy, outlook, noise and overlooking.
2. Produces a positive relationship between buildings, street and spaces both existing and proposed, where:
 - a) The layout of the development reduces opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour; contributes to improving community safety; and makes provision for the management and maintenance of the development;
 - b) New streets are not dominated by vehicular traffic;
 - c) The layout of the development is legible, meaning it is easy to orientate oneself and move through.
3. Contributes to the improvement of the public realm close to the development, particularly sites close to town, district and local centres and other priority regeneration areas by using high quality hard and soft landscape material and street furniture; and where development is of a significant scale or prominence makes provision for public art.

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