ANNEX C

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Your Reference
P642
Our Reference
T/APP/AI910/A/90/166248/P8

Date 22 FEB 91

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPEAL BY ALEC A WHITE & CO
APPLICATION NO:- 4/0895/90

1. As you know, I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal, which is against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for the erection of 10 flats, parking and alteration to access road on land off Seymour Road, Northchurch. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council, and also those made by Northchurch Parish Council and interested persons. I have also considered those representations made directly by interested persons to the Council, which have been forwarded to me. I inspected the site on 18th January 1991.

2. From the representations made and my inspection of the site and surroundings, I consider that the main issues are whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its affect on the amenities of adjoining residents.

3. The appeal site is composed of the end part of long gardens belonging to dwellings fronting Seymour Road, and a large land-locked area of land which is boxed in by properties on High Street, Duncombe Road, Seymour Road and Applecroft. This part of the conservation area includes the curtilages of properties fronting High Street and Duncombe Road and the land-locked part of the appeal site. I noted that the buildings in this area are very mixed in style, and are very simple and unsophisticated in character. They buildings are generally 2 storey and closely packed.

4. The proposed flats would be accommodated in a single L-shaped building. This would be 2 storeys high with a hipped roof. There would be large faceted bays, and smaller rectangular bays, extending up to the roof. The main roof would be punctuated by the complex roof structure of the larger bays. Although I consider that only glimpses of the main part of the 2 storey buildings on the appeal site would be seen through the gaps between the frontage properties, I consider that the roof and first floor will have a noticeable impact on views from the conservation area, bearing in mind the rising level from High Street and the scale of the proposed L-shaped building. In my opinion the rather shallow, complex, hipped roof form and large bays would not reflect the simple traditional buildings of this part of the conservation area. This leads me to conclude that the proposed building would be an assertive design which would have a strong impact on the character of this part of the

conservation area. I do not think that the proposed development would preserve or enhance the existing simple character of the conservation area, and in my view it would be harmful to that character.

5. The local planning authority, and residents on High Street, are concerned that the proposed development would cause loss of light, sunlight and aspect to these properties. The proposed building would stand some 2m to the north-west of the existing wooden building. In this position it would stand wholly in front of no.99 High Street. I consider that the proposed development would not impinge unreasonably on the more distant and oblique views of the proposal from living rooms in nos 97 and 101 High Street. A gable of the proposed 2 storey building would stand some 11m from the living rooms in the rear off-shot of the Post Office, and some 21m from the main elevation of this building. I consider that the relationship of these buildings will cause loss of daylight and aspect to the rooms in the off-shot. However, there are only high level, obscure glazed windows in this elevation, and I cannot agree that there would be any loss of privacy. I consider that the bay windows at the front of this building are far enough away from the main elevation of the buildings on High Street that there would be no unacceptable overlooking of these properties.

6. The main car park for the proposed development would be in the south-east corner of the appeal site, running along the garden boundary of dwellings fronting Duncombe Road, the car park of Seymour Court, and the back garden of "Romney". In this position the car park would be only some 9m from the rear elevation of dwellings fronting Duncombe Road, and within 3m of the rear elevation of "Romney". I consider that there would inevitably be some disturbance to these dwellings from the close proximity of a car park of this size. I have noted your suggestion that a wall could be constructed along the boundary instead of a fence, but I cannot see that this would overcome this problem to any great extent.

7. The council considers that the alterations to the access would result in a poorer environment for residents at Tudor Court. At the present time the access only serves this small development. The approved scheme for these flats included planting of trees and shrubs on either side of the access to provide an attractive entrance to the car park area and a small amenity area at the car park entrance. The proposed scheme would include widening the road and creating a turning head. This would result in the loss of a large part of this landscaping, including the amenity area. I consider that this would be a degredation of the environment around the flats which would inevitably result in a loss of amenity enjoyed by these residents.

8. In conclusion it seems to me that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. I also consider that the proposed development would result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to some of the residents adjoining the appeal site. I consider that these matters hold most weight in determining this appeal. I have considered all other matters raised, but these do not alter my decision.

9. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

Trudy Crane

Ms T Crane BA MPhil DipConsStudies MRTPI
INSPECTOR