

SELBY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

INSPECTOR'S REPORT

INTO OBJECTIONS TO THE DEPOSIT DRAFT

following

A LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

held between

20 JULY 1999 AND 12 MARCH 2001

at the Civic Centre, Portholme Road, Selby

M D Shaw, MA (Oxon), MA, MRTPI

Inspector

May, 2002

RECOMMENDATION

19.161 That paras 8.20 – 8.22 be modified as follows:

'Tadcaster town centre provides a limited range of shopping and commercial facilities for people living in the town and a small rural catchment. However, the quality of the retail offer has recently been enhanced by the development of a supermarket at Mill Lane. Whilst the centre is relatively easily accessible to a large number of people, including those reliant on public transport as well as car borne visitors, there is still leakage of expenditure to adjoining centres such as York and Leeds. The centre currently benefits from adequate free car parking.

The District Council is committed to strengthening the vitality and viability of the town centre and reducing shop vacancy rates. The following policies, in conjunction with general policies in the Plan, are intended to maintain and enhance the physical fabric of the town centre, and to promote environmental enhancement measures and limited retail development.'

Environmental improvements

19.162 The parties agree on an amended wording of para. 8.23 [SSOB(T) 8.3] and I shall recommend accordingly.

19.163 However, SSOB(T) suggest that their Policy TAD/1 should replace the council's subsequent Policy TAD/4 which sets out how the council will seek, in co-operation with landowners, to introduce a comprehensive scheme of environmental improvements. The council see this as a more general and robust policy than SSOB(T)'s proposal but one which would not prejudice the detailed proposals which SSOB(T) advance. SSOB(T) support Policy TAD/4 but wish to see it moved to their suggested 'Conservation Area' section of the Plan.

19.164 SSOB(T)'s Policy TAD/1 refers specifically to proposals for the enhancement of land identified on the Proposals Map by the provision of the town green, the enhancement of existing car parking and a market, which would be located in the permanently pedestrianised area of Kirkgate between its junction with Westgate and the access to Robin Hood Yard [Pegg Lane]. This would be done in a sympathetic manner having regard to the need either to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the surrounding listed buildings.

19.165 These are two basically different approaches. The council's gives parameters for development whereas SSOB(T)'s pursues specific provision of land uses. I agree with the council that the latter approach is too narrowly focused and would not provide criteria against which to judge other proposals than those to which reference is made. Nor would it encourage further schemes which I consider are desirable to improve the town centre and Conservation Area more generally. I address the issue of specification of the use of natural materials in such schemes below at para. 19.221.

19.166 In addition, the proposal for a 'town green' is progressing and strictly speaking should not be a proposal. There have been problems of litigation and differences of approach which clearly need to be resolved in the interests of the town before a comprehensive scheme is agreed

and progressed. I hope this will happen, and exhort the parties to co-operate on preparing an agreed and comprehensive scheme. Meanwhile I can only prefer and endorse the council's more general criteria-based policy against which any and all proposals may be judged. I believe that the lower case reference to the scheme which has already been approved, and is in line with SSOB(T)'s Policy TAD/1, is all that can be said at this stage. I see no reason either to include both policies TAD/1 and TAD/7, as SSOB(T) propose. I therefore endorse DDSLDP para. 8.24 and Policy TAD/4.

RECOMMENDATION

19.167 That para. 8.23 be modified to read as follows:

'The town centre is relatively compact and falls largely within Tadcaster Conservation Area. It includes a number of non-retailing uses such as small commercial offices and residential properties. Although containing a wealth of historic buildings, the centre has lost some of its traditional focus. Planning permission was granted in 1994 for the provision of a 'town green', landscaped car park and a market, both surfaced in natural materials on land bounded by High Street, Chapel Street, Kirkgate and Westgate, which would provide an attractive focal point for the town centre. One of the main objectives of the scheme is to draw together all the various elements in this part of the town into a unified whole, thus strengthening the character, infrastructure and attractiveness of the town (see Town Centre Proposals Map). In particular, the 'town green' forms an appropriate setting for the listed Old Vicarage, Shann House Hotel and the former Sunday School. The 'town green' will also provide links for the town centre through to the green area of the churchyard and riverside.'

but no modification be made to para. 8.24 or Policy TAD/4.

Shopping and Commercial Uses [707/43, 722/5]

19.168 It is agreed by the council and SSOB(T) that paras. 8.25-27, and the further reference to the new supermarket embodied in PIC 276, should be amended to read as follows:

'Recent studies have established that there is a very limited scope for any additional retail floorspace in the town. Nevertheless, there is a need to improve the quality and range of shopping provision. Shop units tend to be small due to the historic character of the town. Whilst the town cannot compete with higher order centres nearby, it may, on a modest scale, improve the retail offer through the introduction of additional modern shop units coupled with environmental improvements.

Historically, the retail core of the town extended from Wharfe Bridge to Chapel Street, but the centre of gravity of the town has moved eastwards since the opening of the supermarket at Mill Lane. The central area now includes this new supermarket and the frontages up to the Wharfe Bridge. This is shown on Proposals Map 60.'

19.169 I consider that this is a reasonable summary of the situation with regard to the town's retail role. It reconciles the differences between the parties without being specific and prejudging, as both were in previous drafts, about the scope and scale of development.