
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2016

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/W/16/3154482

14B Queen Street, Uppingham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 9QR

- 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 Mr Clive Giles against the decision of Rutland Council.
 - The application Ref 2015/0998/FUL, dated 4 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of outbuilding to dwelling house including installation of new windows and access door (part retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development as it appears on the appeal form as it most appropriately reflects the development for which planning permission is sought. It is clear that both parties are content with this approach since the same description appears on the Council's decision notice.
3. It was also clear at the time of my site visit that the development for which planning permission is sought has been carried out. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether or not the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Uppingham Conservation Area (UCA).

Reasons

5. Whilst being to the rear of buildings that face the High Street to the north, the appeal site occupies a prominent position when viewed from both Queen Street and the public car park to the rear of the library. The appeal building is a former outbuilding which was likely associated with some of the larger buildings that face High Street. It is predominantly of brick with a slate roof. It is two storeys in height but modest and simple in its proportions and detailing. Given the traditional form of the building and its degree of prominence, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the UCA.
 6. I note that the principle of the conversion of the building to residential use is not a matter in dispute between the parties. In agreeing with this conclusion, I
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- have regard to both a previous planning permission for a similar development and the range of services nearby that can be accessed via sustainable means.
7. However, it is clear that by virtue of both the insertion of wholly new openings and the use of a non-traditional material within these and the pre-existing openings, the character and appearance of the building has been noticeably altered. I accept that in some cases the use of non-traditional materials may be appropriate but in the case of the appeal building, the UPVC frames are overly chunky and sheer in their external finish. As a result they jar with the traditional form, materials and detailing of the appeal building. In addition, the insertion of further openings and their resulting uniform layout at the first floor level particularly has overly domesticated the appeal building and thus detracts from its original function.
 8. Whilst I accept that the development has sought to replicate traditional detail elements such as glazing bars, headers and cills, this is not sufficient to render the development acceptable given my findings above. The overall result of the development has therefore been a near complete erosion of the character and appearance of the building which, when considering its degree of prominence, has had a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the building itself and the UCA.
 9. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework¹, the harm that is caused by the development is less than substantial and as such it should be weighed against the public benefits. In this case, the new units likely increase energy efficiency which would contribute to reducing the appellant's carbon footprint and thus assist with the national drive to reduce energy consumption. I am not persuaded however that this alone is sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
 10. As a result, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the building and consequently the UCA. The development is therefore contrary to Policies CS19 and CS22 of the Core Strategy² and Policies SP15 and SP20 of the Local Plan³. These Policies seek to ensure that, along with section 12 of the Framework, new development should be of a high quality and contextually appropriate design and appearance and the historic environment is protected from harm through inappropriate or damaging development.

Other Matters

11. I accept that there are other examples of the use of UPVC frames elsewhere in the UCA, and in some cases these are in visually prominent locations close to the appeal site. However, traditional, slender and tactile window and door material and design remain a dominant element that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the UCA. Whilst the use of UPVC as a non-traditional material has clearly had an eroding effect on this in some places, this is not sufficient as an argument to suggest its further use would be acceptable and thus allow further erosion to occur.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

² Rutland Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

³ Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document 2014

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR