
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2019

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/W/19/3229619

56 Dunster Street, Northampton NN1 3JY

- 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 Mihail Dicusar against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2019/0282, dated 4 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 May 2019.
 - Replacement door and windows to UPVC.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice as it is more concise. This is also the description used by the appellant on the appeal form. I have therefore used this description within my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the Boot and Shoe Quarter Conservation Area

Reasons

4. The site is located within the Boot and Shoe Quarter Conservation Area (CA). As the name of the CA suggests, and as detailed within the Boot and Shoe Quarter CA Leaflet Guide, its significance derives from Northampton's history as a centre for boot and shoe production. The surrounding area includes a number of buildings associated with this past industry, showcasing its evolution from its origins in people's homes to larger factory buildings.
5. The appeal site is a former boot and leather warehouse which retains many original and distinctive features, such as the decorative lintel and lantern above the entrance door and the small pane cast iron window frames.
6. The historical use of the site and its retention of original features means that individually it adds to the significance of the CA. The site however is also the end property in a terrace of 5 buildings, which have the same historical connection with the former boot and shoe industry and are all of the same size, and design. The buildings are a distinctive and attractive block within the

streetscene adding to the overall character and understanding of the history and development of the surrounding CA.

7. The proposal seeks to replace the existing windows, timber door and transom window with uPVC double glazed frames. This would introduce a modern and relatively incongruous material in to what is presently a largely historically intact frontage. The thickness of the frame, large centre transom and applied mullions would not retain the sleek, slim appearance of the existing frames. The set back of the window and door from the existing front elevation would also be decreased due to the size of the frames, detracting from the proportions and detailing of the existing openings and building frontage.
8. Whilst I saw on site that there are other properties with uPVC in the surrounding area the host buildings are not directly comparable in size or design to the appeal site. Where there is some comparison, such as within the terrace of which the appeal forms part, uPVC windows that have been installed clearly detract from the character of the host building and surrounding area due to their incongruous materials and inconsistency with the existing historic character of the host building.
9. I note the appellants comments in relation to the condition of the existing windows and although I saw on site that there was some damage to one of the small window panes, overall the windows and door appeared to be in reasonable condition. Replacement with uPVC frames and double glazing may have some benefit in respect of thermal efficiency and upkeep of the building, though there is little evidence before me to demonstrate that the installation of uPVC is the only way to achieve this.
10. The proposals due to the materials, size and design, would result in harm to the historic integrity of the host property and as a result would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Whilst this harm would be "*less than substantial*" when considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, there would be no public benefit arising from the proposal that would outweigh the harm I have identified above, and to which I have attached considerable importance and weight.
11. Therefore, for the reasons stated the development would be contrary to Policies BN5 & S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policies E20 & E26 of the Northampton Local Plan which seek to ensure developments are of a high standard of design, sustaining and enhancing the heritage features which contribute to the character of the area.

Other matters

12. The appellant has indicated that frosted glazing or an alternative colour finish for the uPVC frames could be utilised. Whilst such matters could be dealt with by condition, I do not consider such amendments would significantly alter the harmful impact of the uPVC windows and door. Their overall bulk would not be altered, and they would still be of a material and design at odds with the historic character of the existing building. My consideration of the impacts of the development before me therefore remains unaltered, and as detailed above, I have found the proposals to be out of keeping with the host building and subsequently result in harm to the CA.

Conclusion

13. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR