The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2020 by L Wilson BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Decision by Kenneth Stone BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/W/19/3241106
Apartment 1, 2 Alexandra Crescent, Ilkley LS29 9ER

- 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 Paul Knight against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
- The application Ref 19/00574/FUL, validated 7 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 June 2019.
- The development proposed was described on the application form as "retrospective application for refurbishing the roof dormer (roof dormer size does not increase), removal of small area of stonework, provide door set and external railings."

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The description of development on the application form includes the word "retrospective", however, this term does not amount to an act of development. On the application form the appellant confirms that the development was completed in March 2017. I noted on my site visit that the development had been carried out. From the evidence before me, it is clear that the proposal is to retain the development that has already occurred, and I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host building and whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Ilkley Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is located on the corner of Alexandra Crescent and the A65. The A65 is a busy, main road running through Ilkley whereas Alexandra Crescent is a residential street characterised by terraces. The appeal site is located close to Ilkley town centre and there are a mix of residential and commercial buildings within the local area. No.2 is a late 19th century terrace

built of stone. The apartment occupies the upper two floors of the building and at ground floor there is a shop.

6. The appeal site is situated within the 'Victorian and Edwardian Suburbs' section of the CA which is characterised by stone built terrace family homes built in the 19th and early 20th century. The appeal property makes a generally positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as it reflects the traditional attributes of the area. On the opposite side of the highway is the 'Roman Core' section of the CA which contains a mix of newer development, such as The Lawns, and older, historic buildings as well as Riverside Gardens.

7. The main issue relates to the Juliet balcony element of the scheme. As highlighted by the appellant and local residents, I acknowledge that there are elements which have improved the aesthetics of the dormer. Similarly, it introduces a vertical emphasis which is characteristic of the property's appearance.

8. The Juliet window is large and, because of its height and width, it does not reflect the size of the existing domestic windows within the building nor respect the roofscape of the original building. The scheme results in a prominent addition, in a location between the roof and first floor, where you would not expect to see such a dominant feature. The scheme appears at odds with the character of the host property because the gap between the Juliet window and first floor windows is uncharacteristically small. The development unbalances the proportions of the building and results in a window which does not match the scale of the original domestic windows.

9. The original dormer negatively impacted the appearance of the original building and the development has further eroded the character of the host building. Consequently, the refurbished dormer draws the eye and results in an over-powering, discordant addition which causes harm to the character and appearance of the host building.

10. Dormer windows are generally designed to be subordinate additions and set up from the eaves. Within the CA there are numerous examples of dormers. However, the Juliet style window is quite different from those I observed on my site visit and those highlighted by the appellant due to its size and removal of the eaves line.

11. Although the building does not form a key focal point within the CA, it is located within a prominent and visible elevation as it is adjacent to the A65. Thus, the dormer is clearly visible from public vantage points. The Juliet balcony breaks through the eaves, which is an important architectural detail of buildings of this era that ties the terraces together. The scheme is out of keeping with the architectural style and character of the terrace, and wider area, because of its siting and due to it being disproportionate to the domestic windows. The development results in a more prominent dormer which disrupts the eaves.

12. The harm caused is less than substantial given the mix of dormers within the area, nevertheless it is of considerable importance and weight. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

13. As acknowledged above, I recognise that the scheme has resulted in some visual improvements but when taken cumulatively the development is harmful. The appellant contends that the proposal provides an affordable property with improved internal living conditions, I consider this ultimately to be a private benefit to the appellant. Although the appeal site is situated within a sustainable location, I am not persuaded that the development contributes to the town's shops and other facilities. The scheme merely provides more attractive living conditions for the appellant rather than increasing the number of occupants. These public benefits are modest and do not outweigh the harm to the CA that I have identified. The proposal therefore causes harm that is not justified or outweighed, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

14. The appellant has drawn my attention to the fallback position. I am not persuaded that the dormer would be reverted fully to its original appearance. I am not convinced that the same materials would be used to match the original dormer, and in any event, there are numerous examples of similar dormers within the locality. The appellant also suggests a condition could be used to change the balustrade and to remove the Juliet balcony altogether. Insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that such conditions would improve the appearance of the scheme. Consequently, I am not convinced that the fallback position or the suggested conditions would outweigh the harm identified.

15. I find that the development has a significant adverse visual effect upon the character and appearance of the host building and does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Accordingly, the development does not comply with Policies EN3, DS1, DS3 and SC9 of the Bradford Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2017) and the Framework. These Policies seek, amongst other matters, to promote good design and to ensure new development is appropriate in relation to its context.

Other Considerations

16. Within the vicinity of the appeal site are three grade II listed buildings: the Old Grammar School, the former Lister's Arms Hotel and the former stables to the hotel. The Council raise no concerns in respect of the effect of the development on the setting of these listed buildings, and I have no reason to consider otherwise. The scheme does not unduly interrupt views of the listed buildings, nor does it have any notable impact on how the heritage assets are experienced. Consequently, I am satisfied that the development has a neutral effect on these heritage assets and preserves the character and appearance of the setting of the listed buildings.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

L M Wilson

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I agree and conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Kenneth Stone

INSPECTOR