



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 January 2020

by Chris Forrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/V2825/D/19/3240988

2 The Headlands, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2PA

- 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 Mrs Esther Gammage against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2019/0819, dated 24 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/V2825/D/19/3242287

2 The Headlands, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2PA

- 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 Mrs Esther Gammage against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2019/1182, dated 12 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion with rear dormer and hipped to gable roof extension incorporating tile hanging to side gable (part retrospective) at 2 The Headlands, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2PA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref N/2019/1182, dated 12 September 2019, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with approved plan DD 18/231.1D dated 12.09.2019.

Procedural Matters

2. As set out above, there are two appeals which relate to the existing dwelling. Both appeals relate to the construction of a hip-to-gable roof extension at the side with a dormer at the rear. The works which Appeal A relates to have already been carried out, whilst Appeal B in effect proposes to retain the development albeit with the cladding on the side elevation being replaced with vertically hung roof tiles.
3. Therefore, whilst the two proposals are different, they are clearly related and I have therefore considered the issues which arise from them together.

4. The Appeal A development has been described by the Council as a loft conversion with rear dormer and change hipped to gable roof (retrospective), whilst the appellant has described the proposal on the appeal form as a Loft Conversion - retrospective planning permission to retain cobblestone cladding used in with permitted development certificate.
5. In respect of the Appeal B development, the Council have described this as a loft conversion with rear dormer and hipped to gable roof extension incorporating tile hanging to side gable (part retrospective). The Appellants appeal form describes the proposal as a loft conversion, retrospective application to retain cladding finish by building up the gable end and finishing it with tile.
6. Whilst both descriptions accurately describe the proposals before me, I consider that the Councils description are clearer and I have therefore determined the appeals on this basis.

Main Issue

7. The main issues on both appeals is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

8. The appeal property is located at the southern end of The Headlands close to its junction with Wellingborough Road. The property itself is a semi-detached dwelling constructed with brickwork at ground floor level with render to the first floor. The upper parts of the south side elevation of the property are highly visible in the streetscene largely owing to its location at the bottom of the rear garden area to 609 Wellingborough Road.
9. My attention has been drawn to a Lawful Development Certificate¹ for a proposed loft conversion with hipped to gable roof and roof dormer/roof lights. From the evidence before me this was granted by the Council. However, the proposal which this certificate related to differs in relation to the gable wall element and the materials utilised.
10. The Council have suggested that had the development been carried out in similar materials to the host dwelling, then the development would have been 'permitted development' and I have no reason to disagree with that view. Therefore, it seems to me that the acceptability of the proposal turns on the merits of the materials used.
11. The exterior of the built up gable end and the dormer window have been clad using a cobblestone hardie board. The net result of this is that, visually, the light-coloured cladding stands out as an unacceptably prominent feature especially given the exposed nature of the side elevation of the property in the streetscene.
12. In addition to the above, as constructed, the works have resulted in a development which does not have a well defined gable end as the continuation of the horizontal cladding along the side cheek of the dormer (and the resultant lack of barge board on the rear slope of the gable end) results in the

¹ Reference N/2018/1679

appearance of an excessively bulky structure. This lack of definition of the gable end adds to the harm I have found in relation to the materials used.

13. In coming to the above view, I acknowledge that there are other properties along The Headlands and other nearby roads² which have dormer windows clad in materials which don't necessarily match the materials of the host dwellings. However, it is highly significant that none of the dormer windows I observed at my site visit were as prominent at the appeal development.
14. In respect of the rear elevation and the north facing cheek of the dormer window, these are not readily visible from public vantage points. However, they are visible from the rear of a number of residential properties which face the appeal property. That said, I am of the opinion that the cladding used on the exterior of the dormer window on these sides is not unacceptable in its current form.
15. Notwithstanding that, the harm I have found in relation to the gable end cladding means that the as-built proposal (Appeal A) results in harm to the streetscene and the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) (WNJCS) and Policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan 1993-2006 (1997) (NLP) which amongst other matters seek the highest standards of design which reflects the character of the surroundings. It would also conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
16. Turning to the Appeal B proposal, this seeks to address the above concern by changing the external appearance of the gable end by replacing the cobblestone hardie board with vertically hung roof tiles to match the main roof. The proposal would also include a bargeboard to create a visual impression of a gable end in a similar fashion to that to the front of the property. The south side cheek of the rear dormer would remain cladded with hardie boarding.
17. To my mind the use of vertically hung tiles on the gable end, together with the additional bargeboard, would represent a very significant change to the visual aspect of the development and its impact on the streetscene. With these changes in place, I am of the opinion that the development would not harm the overall character and appearance of the host property or the streetscene in general.
18. For the above reasons the appeal B development would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area and would accord with Policy S10 of the WNJCS and Policies E20 and H18 of the NLP. It would also accord with the overarching aims of the Framework.

Conditions

19. The Council have not provided any suggested conditions in anticipation that I might allow either of the appeals. Notwithstanding that, I have considered whether it would be appropriate to impose any conditions on the Appeal B scheme. In this case, I consider that it is necessary to include a condition which specifies the approved details for the reason of certainty.

² Including 51 The Headlands and 31 Bush Hill

20. I have also considered whether it is necessary to impose a condition in relation to the implementation of the alterations to the gable end. However, in order to implement the appeal permission it would be necessary to undertake some 'positive' works to start the alteration works to the gable end. In the event that no such works are undertaken, the works which have already been carried out would remain unauthorised and could be liable for enforcement action. Therefore, in the absence of any suggested conditions from the Council, I am of the view that other than the plans condition, there are no other conditions necessary.

Conclusions

21. Taking all matters into consideration, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed and Appeal B allowed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR