
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2020

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/20/3249562

24 Woods Lane, Potterspurpy NN12 7PT

- 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 Justin Carlin against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2020/0056/FUL, dated 14 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2020.
 - The development is described as roof windows install into roof line.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. At the time of the visit I noted that the roof lights have been installed. The application has been submitted retrospectively and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. It appears from the evidence before me that there are ongoing investigations relating to other elements of the appeal building. However, these are not matters which are before me as part of this appeal and have not influenced my decision.
4. The South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (2020) (LP) has been adopted since the appeal was submitted. Saved Policies G3 and EV1 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) have been superseded by Policy SS2 of the LP. The appellant and the Council have commented on the new policies. I must make a decision based on the development plan at the time of my decision. I am satisfied that no interested party has been prejudiced by my approach.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area including the host building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

6. I have been made aware of the planning history for the site which includes the grant of prior approval for the change of use of the building from an office to

- residential use and permission for the installation of rooflights in the rear elevation.
7. The appeal property is a one and a half storey converted rural building extending along one side of Woods Lane. Aside from the introduction of a modern entrance, windows and rooflights it retains a traditional form and appearance.
 8. The property is located within the village of Potterspurty close to the main road through the village, although the arrangement and appearance of the appeal property and the group of dwellings opposite contribute to Woods Lane's rural character.
 9. Supplementary Planning Document 'The Re-use of Rural Buildings for Residential Use' (SPD) relates to agricultural, industrial or ancillary buildings in both open countryside and in rural villages. The SPD contains guidance relating to alterations to roofs and encourages the retention of unbroken roof slopes. Where they are essential, rooflights should face a courtyard and be flush with the slope in order to maintain their traditional appearance.
 10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), at paragraph 197, sets out in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets a balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss of the significance of it.
 11. The appellant contends that due to the building's historic association with a neighbouring shop it is not a rural building. However, in my view, the previous use of the building and its position within a village does not diminish its traditional rural appearance or its contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
 12. I find that the number of rooflights, their position at two different levels in the roof slope and their protrusion above the plane of the roof makes them very apparent and noticeable in the surrounding area. As a result, they are unsympathetic and obtrusive interrupting the roof space and adversely affecting the building's traditional rural appearance. This results in harm to the significance of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset and to the character and appearance of the area.
 13. The appellant contends that the rooflights are required to provide satisfactory living accommodation for future occupants. However, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence to suggest that without them their living conditions would be compromised. The installation of rooflights for the benefit of future occupants does not outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area.
 14. I note that there are other examples of rooflights in the area. However, I have not been made aware of the individual circumstances that led to them being installed. In any case, every appeal must be considered on its own merits. The presence of other rooflights in the area adds no weight in favour of the appeal scheme.
 15. As such, the development is contrary to Policy SS2 of the LP, which amongst other things, requires new development not to adversely affect built heritage and to demonstrate compatibility and integration with its surroundings and the distinctive local character. It would be contrary to Policies SA and BN5 of the

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (2014) which, amongst other things, seek to ensure the sensitive re-use of under used heritage assets.

16. The proposal would be contrary to guidance set out in the SPD and Chapter 7.5 of the Council's Design Guide which, amongst other things, encourages the retention of unbroken roof slopes and for alterations to respect the original character of the building. It would also be contrary to Sections 12 and 16 of the Framework, which amongst other things, seek to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area; are sympathetic to local character and history and for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above the appeal does not succeed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR