



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2020

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/20/3251649

Evenley Stores, 23 The Green, Evenley NN13 5SQ

- 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 Rupert Rowling against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2019/1808/FUL, dated 8 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 October 2019.
 - The development is changing colour of windows and door to Stiffkey Blue from white.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. At the time of my site visit I noted that the windows and door have been painted Stiffkey blue in colour. The application has been submitted retrospectively and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. The South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (2020) (LP) has been adopted since the appeal was submitted. Saved Policies G3, EV1, EV9, EV10, EV12 and EV35 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) have been superseded by Policies SS2, LH1, HE5 and HE6 of the LP.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 parties have been prejudiced by my approach.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Evenley Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is located within the village of Evenley and within the Evenley Conservation Area. It sits on the northern side of The Green an important open space denoting the historic plan of the village.
6. The CA derives its significance from the historic green and the redevelopment of the village by the Peirrepoint family during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Properties in the CA and especially around The Green have a pleasing coherence created through their scale, limestone appearance, and architectural detailing including white or light-coloured windows and doors.

7. I acknowledge that the appellant places considerable importance on their brand identity and the associated colour. However, the colour used is a stark contrast to the surrounding colour palette. It draws the eye and is an unduly prominent and incongruous feature along The Green diminishing the prevailing sense of coherence.
8. I note the contents of the Evenley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and I appreciate that heritage colours could encompass a wide spectrum of colours. However, which specific regard to the proposals in front of me I find that the colour of the windows and door are not sympathetic to the neighbouring properties around The Green undermining the appearance of the area.
9. In light of the above I find that there would be some, albeit limited harm to the CA. In accordance with Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), it is for the decision maker, having identified harm to a designated heritage asset, to consider the scale of this harm. In this case I conclude that the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the character or appearance of the CA. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use, which I now turn to.
10. In this regard, I acknowledge the economic benefit that the company brings to the local community. However, this benefit is modest. I therefore afford this benefit limited weight. Taking into consideration the points above I find that the harm to the CA clearly outweighs the public benefits of the development.
11. As such, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. It is therefore contrary to Policies SS2, LH1, HE5 and HE6 of the LP which, amongst other things, requires new development to respect the character and appearance of conservation areas. It would be contrary to Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) which, amongst other things, requires development to be sympathetic to locally distinctive design styles in order to contribute to a sense of place. It also conflicts with the Framework.
12. The development is also contrary to the Shop Fronts Supplementary Planning Guidance which requires proposals to reflect the architectural and historical character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

13. I note the presence of other non-white colour doors and windows in the area including The Red Lion Public House and further afield. However, I am not aware of the individual circumstances behind them, and in any case every appeal must be considered on its own merits. The presence of other examples does not justify the harm that I have identified.
14. The letters of support provided by the appellant counts neither for nor against the development. I note the representations made by a local resident in relation to the appeal. Whilst the development may well distinguish it from nearby residential properties, I find that this would be harmful to the significance of the CA.

Conclusion

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

B Thandi

INSPECTOR