



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2022

by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/21/3287463

30 The Green, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 6QD

- 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 Kerry Moor against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNN/2021/0124, dated 13 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of the loft with a dormer to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter and Main Issue

2. There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the appeal property. In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting the determining authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I saw that whilst the appeal property is near to these listed buildings, it is separated from them by roads and open spaces and therefore sufficiently distant from these heritage assets so as it would not affect their settings or features of interest.
3. Therefore, in reviewing the evidence before me, the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character or appearance of the Kingsthorpe Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached inter-war house in the Kingsthorpe Conservation Area (CA). This designated heritage asset comprises an historic settlement built on sloping land. In addition to its topography its significance and special interest is derived from its village character with historic buildings of varying styles set around a Green. The Green is a central feature of the CA which allows the appreciation of the 12th Century Church. The Church enjoys an elevated position, and its spire, along with other historic buildings and the central Green can also be glimpsed from the smaller green space at the front of the appeal property, and from the verges on the opposite side of the road.
5. The appeal dwelling is one of a row of early 20th Century properties. They have a prominent position on the approach to the green space at the centre of the

village. Whilst relatively modern additions in the settlement, the mixture of semis and bungalows are of an architectural style typical of their era, and this provides a degree of coherency and uniformity to this built form. For this reason, they have a neutral presence in the CA.

6. S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires when determining proposals in conservation areas that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. At paragraph 197, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), sets out matters which should be taken into account including sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 199 states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
7. The proposed dormer would cover most of the rear roof plane of the dwelling and would be built extremely close to its side elevation. The large bulky addition would engulf this roof space and would by virtue of its size and form appear a dominating feature at this high level. In this regard it would harmfully alter the original simple form of the roof and would not appear visually attractive.
8. The proposed change to a gable end would match the existing roof alteration at No 36. However, I saw no rear dormer at that property. The additions at No 24 are smaller dormers than this proposal and the dwelling in that case is a bungalow. Therefore, these examples are not directly comparable to this case. In any event these existing roof alterations are exceptions in the vicinity of the appeal property, and the proposed dormer would be at odds with the appearance of immediate neighbouring dwellings and would appear incongruous in this prominent location for this reason.
9. The appeal property sits above the pavement and road. The dwelling is also slightly angled in its plot so that its side elevation and roof profile is apparent in the street scene. For these reasons the profile of the proposed large box structure, albeit at the rear of the property, would be visible in the street and from the green spaces at the front of the property. I also observed that the insensitive addition would be visible from the open space and paths accessing the school to the west of the dwelling. Therefore, the harm outlined above would not be limited to views from neighbouring gardens, important as such views are in themselves, and the dominating feature would appear an insensitive addition to the wider historic environment. In turn this would be detrimental to the character of the area.
10. This harm would be localised and the harm that would be caused to the significance of the CA as a whole would be less than substantial. In accordance with the Framework this harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
11. The proposal would increase internal space at the property, but this would be of private benefit to the occupants of the dwelling. No public benefits have been advanced, and I have found that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Such harm would not be outweighed by the non-public benefits identified in this case.

12. For the reasons outlined I find that the proposal would be harmful and would not preserve the character or appearance of the Kingsthorpe Conservation Area. It would in this regard be contrary to Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) and Policies E20, E26 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan which together collectively state that designated heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved, and amongst other matters, require development will achieve the highest standard of sustainable design. It would also be inconsistent with the Framework in respect to achieving well-designed places and conserving the historic environment.

Other Matters

13. The officer's report indicates that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy at neighbouring properties and the nearby school. I find nothing that would lead me to disagree with this conclusion and conditions requiring obscured glazing would not be necessary for this reason. However, it is expected that development should not result in such harm and therefore this is a neutral factor in this appeal.
14. The Council's approach to determining the application is a matter outside the scope of the appeal process and has not been a determinative factor for this reason.
15. The appellant's aspiration to stay in the area is noted. But I am not convinced that this harmful proposal is the only means of securing additional space at the dwelling for the appellant's growing family. I therefore attach limited weight to this matter.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons stated above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and to all other material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

INSPECTOR