
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 July 2023

by Michael J Muston BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th July 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/B1930/D/23/3321479

14 Liverpool Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3UJ

- 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 & Mrs J Atkinson against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/22/2568, dated 21 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof lights.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/B1930/D/23/3322127

14 Liverpool Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3UJ

- 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 & Mrs J Atkinson against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/23/0027, dated 6 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof lights.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof lights at 14 Liverpool Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3UJ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/23/0027, dated 6 January 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: P1591/11/E, P1591/12/E, P1591/13/B, S1591/01, S1591/02, S1591/10.

Main Issue

1. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Albans Conservation Area, and the effect of the proposal on the appeal property as a locally listed building.

Reasons – both Appeals

2. The St Albans Conservation Area is based around the historic core of the city centre, but includes residential areas such as that centred around Victoria Street, within which the appeal site lies. The significance of the Conservation Area (CA) as a whole stems in part from the historical importance of the centre of the city. More locally to the appeal site, the significance of Liverpool Road stems to some extent from the age and uniformity of the terraces, particularly, although not exclusively, when viewed from Liverpool Road itself.
3. All of the dwellings in Liverpool Road are also locally listed buildings, which means that the appeal property is itself a non-designated heritage asset. . The significance of No 14 as a heritage asset primarily stems from its contribution to the terrace of which it forms a part.
4. Liverpool Road is a residential cul-de-sac with long terraces of two storey Victorian houses on either side of the road. Other than two small dormer windows on Nos 4 and 6, the front elevations of these houses are free of dormer windows. By contrast, the rear elevations of the houses on the western side of the road include a considerable number of large dormer windows. On the eastern side of the road, where the appeal site lies, the incidence of dormer windows on the rear elevations of the houses is much lower, and many of these appear smaller than those on the western side of the road.
5. The rear facing roof at No 14 is visible from Upper Lattimore Road, over the top of the single storey Quaker Meeting Room. This is also true of a number of other properties along this side of Liverpool Road, approximately from No 8 to No 18. This is unusual in respect of the rear elevations of properties in Liverpool Road, which are mostly only subject to private views. This distinguishes these properties from others in Liverpool Road where a number of large dormer windows have been permitted. Of these dwellings whose rear roof slopes are visible from Upper Lattimore Road, only No 18's roof includes a rear dormer, which covers about half the width of the roof.

Reasons – Appeal A

6. The proposal in appeal A is for a large dormer window that would occupy a high proportion of the width of the rear roof slope. When seen from Upper Lattimore Road, this would appear as an unduly dominant and unsympathetic addition to the roof of No 14, that would unacceptably detract from the uniformity of the terrace. It would be seen in the context of the nearby dormer window at No 18, but would appear considerably larger than that extension, and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The proposed dormer window in Appeal A would, for the reasons set out above, cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA, and to the contribution made to the terrace by the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset in its own right. The proposal does not result in any public benefit that might outweigh that harm. I therefore conclude that the proposal

would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the St Albans Conservation Area, and would cause unacceptable harm to No 14 as a locally listed building, contrary to Policies 69, 72, 85 and 87 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. These policies seek, amongst other things, development that takes into account the scale and character of its surroundings, that enhances or preserves the appearance of the CA, and that preserves features of architectural or historic interest.

Reasons – Appeal B

8. The proposal in appeal B is for a smaller dormer window, which would sit directly above the two storey outrigger and leave nearly half of the width of the rear roof slope intact. From the public viewpoint in Upper Lattimore Road, over the top of the Quaker Meeting Room, the proposed dormer window would be seen in the context of the existing outrigger, with the retained part of the rear roof slope visible to the side of the new dormer. It would also be seen in the context of the existing dormer window to the rear of No 18, which, although more centrally located on the roof, is of similar size to the appeal proposal. In these circumstances, I consider that the proposal in Appeal B would have a neutral effect on the Conservation Area, and would not unacceptably harm No 14 as a locally listed building.
9. I conclude that the proposed development in Appeal B would preserve the character and appearance of the St Albans Conservation Area, not harm the significance of the CA or of No 14 as a locally listed building. It would comply with Policies 69, 72, 85 and 87 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Conditions

10. In relation to Appeal A, I do not consider that the imposition of conditions could overcome the harm that I consider would be caused by allowing the development to proceed.
11. In relation to Appeal B, as well as standard conditions relating to when the development should commence and compliance with the approved plans, a condition requiring the external materials used to match the existing building is necessary, to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion – Appeal A

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.

Conclusion Appeal B

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be allowed, subject to the conditions listed above.

Michael J Muston

INSPECTOR