



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/23/3326985

Lindisfarne, Wakerley Road, Harringworth, Northamptonshire, NN17 3AH

- 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 S Lindsell against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NE/23/00439/FUL, dated 18 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Remodelling existing property with Double Storey Side and Front Extension, Single Story Front Extension and Orangery to the rear'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issues in this appeal are:-
 - whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the significance and the character and appearance of the Harringworth Conservation Area;
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupier/s at Clairville and Brook House, in terms of privacy.

Character and appearance

3. As the proposal is in a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). The development plan includes policies 2 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016) (CS). Together those policies seek to ensure that proposals conserve and, where possible, enhance the heritage significance of an asset in a manner commensurate to its significance, complement their surroundings in form, scale, design and materials and respond to the site's immediate and wider context and local character without stifling innovation. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has similar objectives as do the emerging policies in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2) which does not yet form part of the development plan but carries significant weight due to its advanced stage.

4. The appeal site lies on the eastern edge of the Harringworth Conservation Area (CA), within a row of mostly modern dwellings that are separated by fields from the central part of the village. At my visit I noted that this attractive village has a strong rural character with occasional views towards open fields between buildings and many historic cottages and converted farm buildings. Most of those are constructed of limestone walls and stone slate or thatch roofing materials and are of one or two storeys with simple shallow plan forms and pitched roofs predominating. Many, like those on the opposite side of the road, are sited adjacent to and parallel to the footway, whilst others sit on narrow plots with side elevations facing the road. Modern dwellings tend to be set back from the road and generally reflect the vernacular style although I noted at my visit a number of more recent, larger dwellings at the other end of the village on Gretton Road, some of which I will refer to later. Throughout the village, limestone boundary walls form a consistent feature.
5. The appeal site comprises a detached two storey house on a wide plot, set back behind a low stone boundary wall and mature trees in the front garden. It is positioned between Clairville, a modern semi-detached bungalow and Brook House, a modern dwelling built in a traditional style. Clairville and its neighbour have deep projecting gables on their front elevations and their uncompromisingly modern style adds little to the more traditional character and appearance of most of the CA. Opposite the drive is a traditional cottage with attached barn conversion linked to a high stone boundary wall which extends some distance along the road.
6. The appeal dwelling is built in imitation stone with a hipped, tiled roof with a chimney and a catslide roof with a flat roof dormer on the front elevation. There is a separate garage of poor quality construction which has a shallow pitched roof and is sited close to the boundary with Clairville. Although the dwelling does not reflect the more traditional building style of much of the CA, its size and scale is assimilated comfortably within its plot and it has a neutral impact on the CA.
7. The proposed development would represent a remodelling and I have therefore assessed its impact on the surrounding area rather than on the existing dwelling. It would result in a deeper and wider plan form. It would have a hipped roof and would include a two storey projecting gabled and hipped projection at one side of the front elevation, a lower gabled roof at the other side of the front elevation and a two storey gabled projection and a single storey orangery on the rear elevation. There would also be smaller hipped roofs over the projection of the garage on the front elevation and over a small, existing single storey side extension.
8. With regard to siting, whilst the proposal would bring the dwelling closer to the western side boundary, in terms of character and appearance that would be acceptable because the existing garage would be removed and a gap of at least 2.3m would be retained which would be sufficient for the dwelling to not appear unduly cramped.
9. In terms of size and scale, the two storey part of the resulting dwelling would be wider than that of either of its neighbours but as it is orientated away from Clairville and there is a substantial gap between the site and Brook House, this in itself would not have a significant impact and as noted earlier, many of the traditional buildings have a wide, albeit shallow, form. However, its width

would be emphasised by the wide, gabled and hipped elements of the roof which would result in an overly complex roof form at odds with the simple roof forms seen elsewhere in this part of the street.

10. Although the dwelling is set back from the street and screened partially by trees in the summer months, it is set on slightly higher ground than the highway and both the front and side elevations would be seen during winter months. I have noted that the two storey part of the western side elevation would be no greater than that of the existing dwelling but the eastern side elevation of two storeys would be particularly bulky given its considerable depth of over 15m, according to the plans. This would be in sharp contrast to the shallow side elevations of many of the historic buildings on the opposite side of the street and close by at no 12 and would introduce a scale of building not seen elsewhere in this part of the CA.
11. I also have concerns regarding the style and detailing of the building which, despite the use of traditional materials, would fail to reflect the simpler, vernacular style seen in many other buildings in the CA that contributes positively to the area. The floor to ceiling windows in the front elevation, the suburban-style garage door and the pillars in front of the front doors are incongruous features that would appear out of place in this context.
12. I have taken into consideration the other remodelled dwellings on the other side of the CA on Gretton Road that the appellant has referred to. Maystone House is a large dwelling with twin gables on its front elevation. Although it is slightly wider than the dwelling proposed here, its side elevations are more modest at less than 10m depth. It has a less complex roof form which together with the steeper gables, traditional detailing of stone window heads, cills and mullions and greater wall to void ratios, results in a more cohesive design that reflects a traditional farmhouse or manor house.
13. Vale House has a somewhat complex roof form and some similarities in design to this proposal. However, it is the last dwelling in the CA and within the setting of the listed Welland Valley Viaduct. It has only one neighbour, a modern bungalow and there is a hedgerow bounding an open field and no dwellings on the opposite side of the road at this point. It therefore has a different, more standalone and open context than the appeal site which lies within a row of dwellings and has a more enclosed setting with a dwelling and wall on the opposite side of the road.
14. Westbrook is a new two storey dwelling with a detached double garage that has replaced a bungalow. It also has more modest side elevations than proposed here and has a simple plan form with a single main pitched roof and cottage-style detailing that has resulted in it blending into its central village context very successfully. Those examples, therefore, have significant differences from the appeal site and this proposal and do not set a precedent for the harm that would be caused in this case.
15. Whilst the harm would be less than substantial, it carries considerable weight and the Framework requires that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Where the harm is less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellant says that the existing dwelling is currently extremely inefficient in terms of energy use and in dire need of repair and that the upgrade would result in insulation to current standards. I accept that this

would be a benefit albeit mainly for the property itself and that the removal of the garage would enhance the street scene. However, both of those benefits could be achieved through a more appropriate scheme and I am not persuaded that they are sufficient to outweigh the wider harm that would arise to the CA from this proposal. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the significance and the character and appearance of the CA, contrary to the policies referred to earlier and to the Framework.

Living conditions

16. The proposal includes a balcony of some 8m in width and 1m in depth, according to the plans, that would be accessed from two patio doors in the main bedroom in the proposed two storey rear projection.
17. Lindisfarne is separated from Brook House by a track leading to fields. Brook House has a large rear garden with its main patio area adjacent to the rear elevation. It has a conservatory/orangery attached to its rear elevation and sited close to its side boundary which comprises a high hedge closest to the house that is evergreen in part and a close boarded fence and trees further down the garden. The appeal dwelling is sited at an angle within its plot and although there is currently a degree of overlooking towards Brook House from the first floor side windows, its rear elevation faces away from Brook House towards Clairville instead. The introduction of a balcony at first floor level on the rear elevation would create the opportunity for additional overlooking of the middle and end parts of the rear garden to Brook House but that would be at an oblique angle.
18. The Council's officer's report implied that a 1.7m balcony screen would mitigate any impacts sufficiently but did not consider whether a condition for that would overcome its objections. Given the orientation, the separation by the track and the distance of at least 16m, the additional overlooking could be mitigated sufficiently by a condition for a 1.7m obscure glazed balcony screen if all other matters were acceptable and the proposal would not cause significant harm in terms of privacy to the occupiers of Brook House.
19. The relationship between Linisfarne and Clairville is a closer one with Clairville sited very close to the side boundary and the appeal dwelling would be some 2.3m from the side boundary at its closest point. Clairville has a long rear garden and it is likely that any sitting out area is positioned away from the side boundary or at the end of the garden. It has a small rear extension and the plans show that dwelling projects some 10m beyond the proposed rear elevation of Lindisfarne. It contains two side windows which face towards the appeal site but from what I saw those do not appear to be the principal windows to habitable rooms. The rear garden of Clairville is already overlooked by the appeal dwelling but the proposed balcony would increase that overlooking. However, a condition for a 1.7m high, obscure glazed balcony screen would reduce that to an acceptable degree if the appeal were allowed and as such, the proposed balcony would not lead to a significant increase in overlooking and would not cause a significant loss of privacy to the occupiers of Clairville.
20. I conclude then that the proposed development would not result in significant harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers and would accord with policies 1 and 8 of the CS which together contain a presumption in favour

of sustainable development and seek to ensure that developments protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

21. Notwithstanding my findings regarding Living Conditions, my findings in regard to Character and Appearance are significant and overriding and for the reasons given, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector