



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/W2845/D/23/3324727

9 Pritchard Close, Northampton, NN3 5BW

- 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 Bartos Tomczyk against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNN/2023/0286, dated 16 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is: Alterations to upper wall external finishing material.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations to upper wall external finishing material at 9 Pritchard Close, Northampton, NN3 5BW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WNN/2023/0286, dated 16 March 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: PC/P/01.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) and policies Q1 and SD1 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 2011-2029 (2023) (LP). Together those policies contain a presumption in favour of sustainable development and require that proposals integrate within the existing local context, that façades create character and visual interest and that developments improve energy efficiency. The National Planning Policy Framework has similar objectives. The Council's 'Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide' (2011) SPD requires that external materials and finishes are durable and of good quality and sympathetic in terms of colour, texture and detail in relation to the existing dwelling.
3. The appeal site comprises an end terraced, two storey house towards the lower end of a sloping cul-de-sac within a residential estate of dwellings of a similar style, built probably in the 1960's or 70's. Like many of the dwellings in the area and the others in this terrace, the appeal dwelling has concrete tile hanging in a dark colour as the cladding material at first floor level. The proposal would replace this with composite, wood effect cladding boards in a

light grey colour which would be fitted horizontally in a tongue and groove style at first floor level.

4. Although most dwellings in the area retain the original tile hanging which provides some degree of uniformity, it is not a high quality material and it has a drab and uninteresting colour and texture. Those facades lack the visual interest sought in policy Q1 and detract from the character and appearance of the area.
5. At my visit I noted that although the five dwellings in this terrace retain the tile hanging, each has different windows and doors and no 12 has cream painted brickwork at ground floor level which diminishes the consistency of this terrace to some degree. The two other terraces on this side of the street have less uniformity and include houses with both plain and painted brickwork at first floor level and others with painted brickwork projections at ground floor level.
6. The first end terrace dwelling at no 1 has grey, horizontal boarding at first floor level similar to that proposed here which the Council says is unauthorised. I disagree that it has less impact than the cladding proposed here would because that property sits in a corner position at the top end and entrance to the cul-de-sac. Nonetheless, it has a smart, contemporary appearance which enhances the character of the dwelling and the street scene and does not look out of place given the variety of finishes and colours within the street.
7. On the opposite side of the street, none of the dwellings were built with tile hanging and several have painted brickwork at ground or first floor levels. I also noted two dwellings that back onto Rectory Farm Road, the main route into the estate, with cladding similar and the appellant has provided photographs of other examples in the area within a terrace.
8. There is, therefore, some variety in exterior finishes within both this street and the wider area and the proposed cladding would therefore integrate comfortably with its surroundings. It would improve the quality of exterior cladding and would enhance the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene. The appellant's evidence shows that the cladding would improve the existing poor insulation of the house and this would be a benefit which adds weight to my findings. I find then that this proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the dwelling or the area and accords with the policies referred to earlier, with the Framework and the Council's SPD.

Conditions

9. In addition to the standard commencement condition, a condition is necessary requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, in order to provide certainty. Given my findings, a condition requiring matching external materials is not necessary or relevant.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development accords with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be allowed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector