



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/25/3358861

58 Grange Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5LY.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs I Worth against the decision of St Albans City and District Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/24/1632 DC4.
 - The development proposed is the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, loft conversion and basement conversion.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider that there are two main issues:
 - a) Firstly, the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of this Locally Listed property and thereby whether it would serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Albans Conservation Area; and
 - b) Secondly, the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers in terms of potential of the proposal to appear overbearing and result in a loss of outlook.

Reasons

First main issue:

3. The appeal property, 58 Grange Street (No58) is a locally listed two-storey mid terrace house, in the St Albans Conservation Area. There is an alley way between the appeal property and its adjoining neighbour to the northwest, No 60. No 60 is also set slightly lower than No 58 to reflect the topography of the street
4. The appellant proposes a single storey rear extension, conversion of roof space, including the construction of a flat roof dormer in the rear roof slope and the insertion of two rooflights in the front roof slope to form an additional bedroom along with internal alterations to the existing basement to provide a hobby room.

5. As I saw rooflights are a relatively common feature in the front roof slope of many of the neighbouring buildings. I therefore concur with the Council that their introduction here would not cause harm to the appearance of the building or the wider conservation area.
6. The single storey ground floor extension, proposed to be built in matching materials, would wrap around the existing two-storey rear outshot, with a lean-to hipped roof. The works to the basement would not impact in any way on the external appearance of No 58. On balance therefore I agree with the Council that these elements of the proposal would also not cause harm to either the architectural integrity of the building or the conservation area.
7. The proposed dormer would have a flat roof which would be lower than the ridge line of the main roof. The dormer would be located centrally in the roof slope with a significant margin of roof left either side and its eill line would be located well above eaves level. In my judgement therefore the proposed small flat roof dormer here would, in itself appear as a relatively modest and well-proportioned dormer that would be neither dominant nor incongruous.
8. However, I note that it is proposed that the dormer would have a fibre glass roof and Cedar cladding. Neither material would be either natural or traditional and therefore would not be appropriate in the context of this property, which is of traditional vernacular design, locally listed and situated within the conservation area.
9. From the evidence I note that the appellant has indicated that she would be prepared to accept a condition requiring the dormer to be clad in plain tiles. However, while the tiles would better match the roof covering given the diminutive size of the dormer, the size and spacing of the windows and relatively small dormer cheeks I consider that tile hanging would not be an appropriate material in this context.
10. The fibreglass roof, which as illustrated on the application drawing would appear deep and heavy compared to a traditional lead or copper roof would also be wholly inappropriate in these circumstances.
11. I therefore consider that the proposed dormer would compromise the architectural integrity of the host property, cause harm to this locally listed building and thereby the character and appearance of the conservation area.
12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. It draws a distinction between substantial harm and less than substantial harm to such an asset. For the latter, which applies here, the test is that the harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.
13. The development would provide additional habitable accommodation and thereby some limited economic benefit. However, given the harm that has been identified I conclude that the public benefits would not outweigh this harm, or the conflict that the development would have with the objectives of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 69, 72, 85 and 87 of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review (Adopted 30 November 1994) (LP) as they relate, along with other things, to the quality of

development and the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Second main issue:

14. From what I have seen and read I concur with the Council's findings that the proposed dormer would not appear overbearing or result in a detrimental loss of outlook or light to the occupiers of No 60.
15. However, the Council is concerned that proposed rear extension, by reason of its depth, proximity to the boundary, eaves height and levels differences between the two dwellings, would result in single storey extension having an overbearing impact and consequent loss of outlook for the occupiers of No 60, to the detriment of their residential amenity.
16. For the following reasons I do not believe that the proposed extension would appear either so overbearing or result in such a loss of outlook as to cause material harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 60. Firstly, due to the overall height of the existing two-storey outshot, which is already a dominant feature. Secondly, given the separation distance between the flank wall of the outshot at the rear of No 60 and the side wall of the proposed extension to No 58. Finally, due to the low eaves height of the proposed extension, being only a little higher than a typical boundary fence panel, and as the roof would in any case slope away from the boundary.
17. I conclude in respect of the second main issue that the proposed development would not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers of No 60 in terms of its potential to appear overbearing or result in a loss of outlook. In this respect the proposal would accord with the aims of LP Policy 72 and the Framework as they seek to protect residential living conditions.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR