
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/25/3358587

11 The Green, Hardingstone, Northampton, West Northamptonshire NN4 7BU

- 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 Cheryl Civil against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/4747/full.
 - The development proposed is replace existing house windows, remove existing grey painted timber windows and replace with thermally efficient upvc windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. In the interests of conciseness and clarity, I have taken the description of development from the Council's Decision Notice.
4. The Council's decision notice solely refers to the effect of the proposal on the Hardingstone Conservation Area (CA). However, the appeal property is attached to 9 The Green (No 9) which is a Grade II listed building. Furthermore, the evidence before me indicates that No 1, 3, 5 and 7 within the terrace are also Grade II listed buildings. The main parties have therefore been invited to comment on the relationship of the proposal with the nearby listed buildings. Given that I have a statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the setting of listed buildings, I have incorporated this matter into the main issue and have taken the comments received on this matter into consideration.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and the settings of the nearby listed buildings.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. 11 The Green (No 11) is a two-storey mid-terraced dwelling situated in the village of Hardingstone, located within the CA. The Hardingstone Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (CAAMP) identifies that the significance of the CA is partly derived from its concentration of historic buildings within the core of the village, situated around The Green. This area comprises an important collection of historic buildings which date from the 16th to the 19th centuries and which show the evolution of the village over time. The Green is therefore an important focal point as the visual heart of the historic settlement with the highest conservation value in the village.

7. No 11 is situated within a terrace of two-storey and three-storey dwellings at The Green, some of which are Grade II listed buildings. By virtue of their traditional materials including Flemish bond brickwork, slate roof tiles and timber framed vertical sliding sash windows, the terrace has a consistent and a high-quality appearance overall. Whilst No 11 itself is not a listed building, with its traditional appearance and materials similar to the wider terrace and the other historic buildings in the village, it contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA, as well as the settings of the nearby listed buildings.
8. Windows are an important feature of heritage assets and often, as in this case, form part of the front elevation of a property and part of the street-scene. This in turn forms part of the CA and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.
9. The use of UPVC windows on heritage assets can often have an adverse effect on those heritage assets, particularly as UPVC tends to be less likely to successfully replicate the design and proportions of the original windows. Indeed, the CAAMP highlights this issue, stating that the prevalence of obviously modern window types in traditional buildings cumulatively undermines the quality of the historic environment in the village. I observed this issue on my site visit, where there were some UPVC windows on historic buildings around The Green and Back Lane which detract from the character and appearance of the CA.
10. Whilst the proposed UPVC windows are described as heritage sash windows within the Appellant's Statement of Case, the Proposed Elevations and the document showing the 'Roseview Ultimate Rose UPVC Vertical Sliders' lacks a sufficient level of detail to adequately depict the design and materials of the proposed windows. Consequently, from the limited evidence before me, the UPVC windows would not be sympathetic, or offer the same level of authenticity or natural texture, to the traditional design and materials of No 11, nor would they complement the traditional style of windows of the listed buildings within the terrace and the wider CA.
11. Being situated among historic buildings and forming part of a wider terrace along The Green, traditional materials, layout, and design reinforce the local identity and enhance the character of the CA. Introducing non-traditional materials would create a discordant visual element in an area that holds significant heritage value and offers a prominent view within the CA.
12. In the absence of convincing information to the contrary, I must therefore find that the proposed windows would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the CA, as well as the setting of the nearby listed buildings.
13. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Section 66(1) of the Act states that special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving listed

buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

14. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and it would not preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The proposal would therefore be harmful to the significance of the designated heritage assets, and this would amount to less than substantial harm as it would be relatively localised. In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development.
15. In that regard, the Appellant states that the existing windows are in a state of disrepair and that they detract from the appearance of the CA. They also raise concerns in relation to the warmth and security of the property, as well as the cost of repairing the windows. However, there is limited evidence before me that the windows are in a state of disrepair. From my own observations on my site visit, the windows did not appear to be obviously damaged, and they do not detract from the appearance of the dwelling and the CA. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence of the costs to repair the windows or of a specific need for enhanced security at the appeal property.
16. I also acknowledge the benefits of the proposal in terms of energy efficiency, heat retention and noise reduction. However, overall, these would amount to no more than a modest public benefit. Consequently, this is not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the identified heritage assets and the great weight I must apply to the heritage assets in line with the Framework.
17. In summary, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and it would fail to preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings. It would therefore conflict with the statutory presumptions under Section 72(1) and Section 66(1) of the Act. It would also conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) and Policies Q1 and ENV6 of the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) (2023). Amongst other matters, these policies require that developments sustain and enhance the heritage features which contribute to the character of conservation areas and locally and nationally important buildings and respond to and enhance locally distinctive townscape and historic environment characteristics.

Other Matters

18. The absence of objections from neighbours, local historians and from the Parish Council, as well as a lack of financial grants to fund works to the existing windows is a neutral factor. Whilst I am also conscious that the Appellant would be willing to discuss style issues with the windows and that they can adapt their plans, my recommendation is based on the development and details considered by the Council.
19. The Appellant also refers to 50 new builds which would have more of a structural impact than the change of windows. However, no further information about this has been provided. Based on the evidence before me, this seems to relate to an entirely different style of proposal, and it is therefore unlikely to be directly relevant to the appeal proposal and does not justify the harm I have found.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. I have concluded that less than substantial harm would be caused to the identified designated heritage assets, but that this would not be outweighed by the identified public benefits. I afford great weight to the conservation of the designated heritage assets.
21. The proposed development would therefore conflict with the development plan and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework which would outweigh this finding. I therefore recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

22. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR