



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2025

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/D/25/3364032

19 Bond Street, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1HR

- 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 Mr and Mrs J Pattle against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/00406.
 - The development proposed is addition of external insulation and over cladding to side and rear walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including No 19 itself and Stowmarket Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The proposal relates to a semi-detached dwelling, within a part of Stowmarket featuring quite high density Victorian terraced housing. Like much of this built pattern, No 19 fronts directly onto the footway on Bond Street, creating an enclosed street scene of tightly packed and modestly sized housing. The proposal is part of works to improve the thermal performance of the property through a mix of internal and external insulation. The Council's planning refusal relates to the proposed external insulation of the gable end and rear wall of the house. A layer of insulation would be applied to the end gable wall, faced with Staffordshire Blue hanging tiles, with an inset pattern of red tiles. The rear wall would be faced with horizontal boarding, covering a thinner layer of insulation and working around the greater amount of fenestration on this elevation.
4. The appeal property marks the extent of this part of the CA, the historic and architectural significance of which relates to the large-scale Victorian expansion of Stowmarket with terraces of worker's dwellings of similar design and materials, largely built with Suffolk white brick walls and slate roofs. Whilst the form of this housing remains mostly intact, many homes have been subject to unsympathetic changes, such as through replacement windows or rendering or painting of the original brick work. The Council's CA Appraisal¹ found too much erosion of original character to include within it the entire area of Victorian terraced housing. However,

¹ adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Mid Suffolk District Council Environment Policy Panel 29 March 2011

the appeal property falls within a part where streets radiate out from a focal point in front of the grade II listed Methodist Church, which was considered worthy of inclusion within the CA.

5. The white brick walls and slate roof at No 19 are facing materials common to the original appearance of the buildings in this location, aspects which contribute to the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset. The architectural detailing and character of No 19 is somewhat more idiosyncratic and ornate than the typical terraced housing here. This relates to its history of past employment use and a later, early twentieth century restoration as a house. The appellant refers to the front elevation, with tall stone lintols over the ground floor openings, the more generous but plain eaves overhang and the set of timber inset casements windows with patterned leaded light glazing. On the gable end a pair of symmetrically placed octagonal windows feature at ground floor level. This all adds to the pleasing individual architecture of the building, but with the white brick walls and slate roof tying this to the prevailing built character in this part of the CA.
6. The proposal is a compromise solution, with the insulation being internal to and preserving the most critical front elevation. The rear elevation of the house has its own pleasing character, and cladding the white brick work with horizontal boarding would detract from this and be unfortunate. However, this rear elevation is not publicly visible and the effect of the cladding on the overall character and appearance of the CA would be slight.
7. Hanging tiles do feature in buildings elsewhere in Stowmarket, but where this occurs this appears an overt decorative feature and not one reflected in this particular Victorian suburb. The gable to No 19 is screened by a relatively large tree, but is nonetheless visible in the street scene, notably upon entering the CA. The well-crafted white brick work on the gable end marries with the walling of the house as a whole, including the most prominent front elevation. The brick work reflects the original built appearance of the building and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. The statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Covering the gable end brick work with contrasting hanging tiles, untypical of the housing in this area and obscuring historic fabric and built detailing, would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. The harm would be exacerbated by the extra layer reducing the deep verge overhang above the gable, which is a characteristic feature of this building. The rather unique architecture possessed by this house provides no mitigation for the harm caused, whereby the tiled gable would appear a rather visible and incoherent feature in the street scene.
9. The harm caused by this proposal to the character and appearance of the CA is less than substantial. Irrespective of this it is a matter to which considerable importance and weight needs to be attached in applying the balance set out in paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). This requires any harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
10. The optimum viable use of No 19 as residential accommodation would not depend upon the works proposed. There are general public benefits from the better heat

insulation contributing to climate change mitigation through lower carbon emissions. However, these public benefits are relatively small and insufficient in this instance to outweigh the less than substantial heritage harm caused.

11. The proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA, including that of No 19 itself and the area in more general terms. This would be in particular conflict with Policy LP19 of the Joint Local Plan (JLP)² which concerns the historic environment. There would be conflict with the consistent but more general aims of JLP Policy LP24 for all new development to contribute positively to its context. There would be conflict with overarching JLP Policy SP09 in respect of the enhancement and management of the historic environment. The external insulation proposed would help achieve reductions in carbon emissions, gaining the support of JLP Policy LP23 in relation to sustainable construction and design. However, the proposal would be contrary to the development plan when considered as a whole.

Conclusion

12. In the light of the findings above, it is not necessary to reach a firm conclusion over whether No 19 should be considered a non-designated heritage asset. Should this have been the case, Framework paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgement over the scale of any harm or loss to significance, which would not alter the conclusions already reached. The proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its built surroundings, failing to preserve those of the CA, in conflict with the Framework and the development plan. As a consequence, I conclude the appeal should not succeed.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR

² Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1, November 2023.