



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2025

by Eleni Marshall BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/D/25/3366501

67 Panton Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB2 1HL

- 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 M Haidour against the decision of Cambridgeshire City Council.
 - The application reference is 24/04823/HFUL.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with front and rear dormer extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note, from the Council's delegated report, that other applications have been made concurrently for further extension and amendment to the dwelling under reference 24/04822/HFUL and 24/04824/HFUL respectively, however, these proposals are separate to that which are before me despite being shown for context within the overall plans for the host dwelling as part of the appeal proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the terraced house and neighbouring properties as well as the New Town and Glisson Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an end of terraced residential dwelling which is located on a corner plot between Norwich Street and Panton Street. I find that the host dwelling is located in a highly prominent location with the front, side and rear elevations being highly visible within Panton Street and Norwich Street with such views being available from a notable distance down each street, respectively. I find that this makes the appeal site more sensitive to change due to the highly visible positioning. The proposal that is before me seeks to undertake a loft conversion with front and rear dormers which would result, as per the submitted plans, in a single dormer window to the front elevation and a larger dormer window to the rear.
5. The appeal property itself is not a designated heritage asset and whilst it may be, as described by the appellant, a more modern build and not a historic building, the appeal site stands within the New Town and Glisson Road Conservation Area (CA). The CA is a designated heritage asset and therefore paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) is relevant in weighing any harm identified, to that designated heritage asset. In addition, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires that special

attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA.

6. At the time of my site visit I found that the dwellings and buildings in the immediate vicinity along Bateman Street, Panton Street and Norwich Street respectively, whilst demonstrating varying ridge heights, are characterised by plain, simple roof slopes with limited examples of notable or visible dormer extensions. I find that the aerial imagery provided in the context of the existing site and location shows, within the immediate vicinity, very limited examples of dormer windows/extensions. I note that, immediately opposite, there are examples of front dormer windows/extensions but, overall, I found these examples to be limited in the context of the immediately surrounding roofscape within which the appeal proposals would be viewed. I noted that there are a number of rooflights in properties within the vicinity, however, whilst these do form part of the character of the area, I do not find that they are comparable to the provision of dormer extensions as are the subject of this appeal.
7. I have based my assessment of the proposal upon the evidence that is before me including my site visit and based upon this, I find that the front dormer and rear dormer extensions would be unsympathetic to, and fail to preserve or enhance, the context of the CA. The front dormer would be, in isolation, more modest in scale and massing, however, it would be positioned in such a manner which would result in an unbalanced addition to the front elevation. I can understand that it has been located, within the proposed plans, to align with the fenestration below but this would not overcome the fact I find the proposal would not relate to the consistent roofscape along Panton Street.
8. Whilst front dormers are present, I find that these are, visually, on a different roof scape where properties are characterised by projecting two bay windows with a height of two storeys which does not result in them being incongruous. Furthermore, the property with the two, smaller, dormers is more balanced due to the dormers aligning with the existing fenestration. Each case should be considered on its own merits, and, in this case, I find that the front dormer would be on a highly visible front roof slope which would appear out of character and visually prominent within the row of dwellings on Panton Street.
9. The proposed rear dormer would dominate the rear roof slope of the host property. I appreciate that, visually, it has been designed to try to break up bulk, scale and massing as a whole but due to its location it would be visible within a large proportion of the street scene of Norwich Street and, cumulatively, the overall additions front, and rear would be visible via the side elevation of the host dwelling from the surrounding streets. I note the appellant has highlighted poorer quality dormers that have, in their opinion, been badly detailed and finished but which are to be stated to have been approved (as evidenced within their appendices) within the same CA, however I do not find that the presence of any examples which could be stated to be poor by contrast could be or should be utilised to justify proposals which I have found to be unacceptable as set out.
10. I find that the aerial imagery provided in the context of the existing site and location shows, within the immediate vicinity, very limited examples of dormer windows/extensions and that the CGI imagery (pages 16/17) shows the visibility of the proposal within the street scene as well as, within image 20, showing that the proposals would result in notable bulk at roof level which would be in contrast to the immediately surrounding roof slopes which do not have dormer windows or

alterations of this nature. Cumulatively I find the proposals would dominate the host dwelling at roof level and would be entirely contrary to the consistent roof scape which I noted at the time of my site visit. I find the proposal would be inappropriate for the character and appearance of its setting within the CA which would result in less than substantial harm to the CA as a designated heritage asset.

11. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the Framework, where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The proposal is for alterations to a private dwelling to facilitate a loft conversion and based upon the evidence before me there are no public benefits which would outweigh the great weight which should be given to the less than substantial harm identified. I note the appellant states that the proposal would secure the optimum viable use of the site, however, based upon the evidence before me I find that the proposals when weighed against the great weight that should be attributed to the harm to the CA are not outweighed as a result of optimum viable use as a result of the proposals.
12. Whilst I note the appellant would benefit from the proposal allowing them sufficient space, however, this is not a public benefit, and the provision of good design is at the heart of sustainable development and is itself not a public benefit but a requirement of appropriate and sustainable development. Change in CA's is, of course, inevitable and nor should they be stagnant or static, however, the need to adapt for modern lives and spatial requirements needs to be balanced against appropriate development in the context of the designated heritage asset and its reasoning for being designated as such. The proposal's potential for energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements is acknowledged, however, I do not find that the loft conversion in isolation would contribute so significantly to such improvements that it would be attributed such great weight that it would overcome the harm I have identified to the CA.
13. The appellant provides other images of varying alterations and dormers and while some of them are within the same CA as the appeal site I do not find that the highlighting of other schemes, which the appellant provides on the basis that it is their opinion that they do not work with or use the local context of the CA, to provide positive support for the proposal that is before me. More so I find that they highlight the importance of ensuring that proposals are appropriate in the context of the CA, especially in highly visible locations. Whilst I acknowledge evidence of dormers as noted within the appellant's submissions, I do not find that these are part of the immediate site context within which the appeal site would be viewed, nor that they have resulted in cumulative proposals of the nature that is before me meaning I attribute limited weight to the examples provided.
14. The principle of a loft conversion is not challenged; however, I find that the front and rear elevations would be negatively impacted within views within the CA as a result of the front and rear dormers cumulatively. Even if I had found the front dormer to be consistent with the arrangement on 17-23, 36 and 70 Panton Street the appeal would still have failed due to the issues which I have identified with the rear dormer and, ultimately, the proposals would cumulatively add bulk at roof level which would be fully visible within the street scene. Whilst there may be some variation in terms of fenestration, outrigger roofs and varying styles, it is notable, as

I have outlined, that the roof slopes themselves in the immediate vicinity are not altered with the presence of dormer extensions as is the proposal that is before me.

15. The proposal would be contrary to Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 58 which requires that alterations and extensions to existing buildings do not adversely impact on the setting or the appearance of conservation areas as well as requiring that proposals for doors and windows, including dormer windows, are of a size and design that respects the character and proportions of the original building and surrounding context. The proposal would also be contrary to LP Policy 61 which requires proposals to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets of the city including views within conservation areas and be of an appropriate scale, form, massing, height, alignment and detailed design which will complement the built form and scale of heritage assets and respect the character, appearance and setting of the locality.
16. I note that the appellant has referred to multiple other sites within the appendices of their statement of case. Each case should be considered on its own merits, however, in relation to the collated referenced appeal cases I do not find that the cases included are comparable to that which is before me. The appeal at 172 Sturton Street¹ allowed roof extensions (rear), however, the appeal site was situated within a row of terraced houses where the Inspector found the site was characterised, to the rear, by various additions including dormer roof extensions as well as having limited public views meaning that, overall, I find the characteristics of the site to be incomparable to that which is before me. The appeal at 17 Brooklands² again included a roof conversion with extensions and that the host dwelling was an end of terraced property. In that case the Inspector stated that views of the rear elevation of the property from within the CA were found to be limited which is again a contrast to the high visibility I have noted.
17. Finally, the appeal at 107 Hemingford Road³ again related to a loft extension, however, the proposal was for raising the ridge and widening of an existing loft extension whereby the property already benefitted from an existing substantial flat roof rear dormer. This is not the case with the appeal that is before me and, furthermore, it was being noted that the rear roof is not seen from the street or any other obvious and near public vantage points as well as there being sizable rear dormers at several dwellings immediately to the north of the appeal property. Overall, therefore, from the information before me the appeals referenced by the appellant is for sites which are notably different in terms of their context and setting than the site which is before me which I find to be visually prominent and standing within an overall unaltered roof scape within the CA as outlined.
18. I note that the exercise of planning judgment does not entitle an Inspector to disregard earlier appeal decisions without comprehensive and robust reasoning. In this case, however, I have reviewed the appeal decisions and decisions supplied by the appellant and I do not find that in dismissing this appeal I am reaching a contrary view to previous decisions due to the facts of the case, and their settings, being materially different and unapplicable to the site which is before me. I acknowledge that there are examples, within the wider CA and other CAs, of front and rear dormers and those which are visible but in the context of the appeal site,

¹ APP/Q0505/D/21/3282535

² APP/Q0505/D/22/3298036

³ APP/Q0505/D/24/3348386

as I have outlined, the immediate vicinity is characterised by a lack of such features and this is sufficient, in this case, to mean that the proposals would result in a dominant and uncharacteristic feature within the setting that it would be viewed on a day to day basis from within the public domain.

19. I note that it is stated that the rear dormer follows principles of previously approved schemes (twin dormers with a link) but that is contemporary to align with the front dormer, however, each case should be considered on its own merits and whilst the property may be of a more modern build and not a historic building or heritage asset itself it does stand within the CA where I have found unaltered roofscapes to be a notable characteristic combined with the highly visible location of the host property as outlined. As noted by the appellant a considerable amount of the roofscape is maintained. I do not find that the additions would add to inconsistency and variety on the front and rear within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site itself.
20. Appendix E is referenced in the context of the refusal reason and as noted, roof extensions can pose a considerable design challenge architecturally. Appendix E does acknowledge that people are trying to meet a need for additional accommodation by extending their houses. It is likely that many dwellings can be sympathetically altered and extended in such a manner, however, some sites will be more prominently and sensitively located as is the case with the appeal site which is before me. I note the proposal has been pursued as one which is innovative and high quality by the appellant, however, even if I had considered the proposal to be acceptable in the context of the host dwelling itself this is entirely separate to the visual impact of the proposal in the context of the CA where the area, is characterised by a lack of such features meaning the proposal before me would result in an alien and uncharacteristic feature within its immediate site context.

Other Matters

21. I note an objection to the proposal which states strong objection and that the proposed dormers would be unsympathetic to the local vernacular and be contextually inappropriate. I have taken account of the local vernacular and site context as well as views of the proposal within the street scene and dealt with this within the main body of this decision letter. It is noted that no residents of the surrounding streets (Norwich Street) did object, however, a lack of objection is a neutral consideration.
22. I note the appellant's concern with regard to the lack of written report from the Conservation Officer as well as the service received from the Council in that regard, however the handling of the application is outside the scope of this appeal which is not accompanied by an application for costs. I note concern with regard to the validity of the verbal comments provided, however, as outlined I have made my own assessment of the proposal based upon the plans and supporting evidence, as well as my site visit, in coming to the conclusions set out within this appeal.
23. I also acknowledge that the appellant has stated that if they had been informed of alterations that could have made the proposal acceptable, they would have made them, however, I cannot take such considerations into account and must consider the proposals based upon the plans that are before me and upon which the council made their decision. Overall, therefore, I note the collated schemes within

appendix D of the appellant's statement of case but based upon its own merits I find the proposal is unacceptable for the reasons set out.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Marshall

INSPECTOR