

Item number 5

Planning and EP Committee 10 November 2015

Application Ref: 15/01388/FUL

Proposal: External wall insulation

Site: 122A And 122B Padholme Road, Eastfield, Peterborough, PE1 5EN
Applicant: Mr Mohammed Hussain

Agent: Mr Stephen Whitehead, Mark Group

Referred by: Councillor Iqbal
Reason: The Council encourages energy efficiency for numerous reasons and the insulation can be matched to existing brickwork so as to not harm the character of the area

Site visit: 18.09.2015

Case officer: Miss Louise Lovegrove
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Recommendation: **REFUSE**

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a two storey building which has recently been converted into two no. residential flats. The building itself is of unique design within the streetscene through architectural features such as square stone bay windows at ground floor and decorative stone lintels to the door and windows. There is a front gablet with detailing to the front elevation also. This design reflects the prominent position of the site on a corner plot at the crossroads junction of Padholme Road with Star Road and Saxon Road.

The front boundary is formed by a mature hedge whilst the side boundary, fronting the public highway, is formed by a 1.8 metre high wall. The property has previously been extended by virtue of a single storey side extension.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the application of external insulation to the front and rear elevations of the property. The render to be applied would project 90mm from the face of the existing elevations. The submitted photomontages show that it is proposed for red brick effect render to the front elevation and cream dashed render to the rear elevations.

The insulation forms part of the wider 'Heataborough' scheme which is in force throughout the Peterborough Authority area.

2 Planning History

No relevant planning history.

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 10 - Adapting and Mitigating Climate Change

Energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings should be supported. New development should comply with local policies for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable. Account should be taken of the landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS10 - Environment Capital

Development should make a clear contribution towards the Council's aspiration to become Environment Capital of the UK.

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012)

PP02 - Design Quality

Permission will only be granted for development which makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment; does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area; is sufficiently robust to withstand/adapt to climate change; and is designed for longevity.

4 Consultations/Representations

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 10
Total number of responses: 2
Total number of objections: 0
Total number in support: 2

No neighbour representations have been received.

Councillor Iqbal

As a Council we encourage energy efficiency for numerous reason, as I'm sure you're aware. External insulation can be matched to existing brickwork so will not impact the area look or character (there are several examples in the area and across the City). If it does, I'm sure the impact will be kept to a minimum and will outweigh the benefits over the long period.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:

- Improved energy efficiency
- Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area

a) Improved energy efficiency

Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) places a duty on local planning authorities to actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings as

part of a move towards a low carbon future. Furthermore, Policy CS10 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) seeks to ensure that all new developments contribute towards achieving the Council's Environment Capital agenda by achieving a greater reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, especially through the use of energy efficiency measures.

The application proposal seeks for the installation of external wall insulation in order to improve the energy efficiency of the property. At present, the building is only of single brick construction and therefore cannot utilise other insulation methods such as cavity wall insulation. Accordingly, the only way that insulation can be applied to the main body of the property is through external methods. The property can however improve efficiency through other measures such as loft insulation, new windows/doors and improved energy rated heating methods.

In light of the above, the proposal would represent an energy efficiency measure which is aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions and is therefore in accordance with both national and local planning policies.

b) Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area

Notwithstanding the above, other local and national planning policies require new developments to respect or enhance the character and appearance of surrounding areas and therefore, a balance must be struck between the benefit arising from the application of the insulation, and harm that results from the application of external render to the character and appearance of localities.

As detailed in Section 1 above, the application property sits in a prominent position within the streetscene and this results in not only the principal (front elevation) being visible from the public realm, but also the rear. The building itself is of unique design within the locality, with architectural detailing which reflects its prominent position. Whilst it is noted that the submitted photomontages indicate that the decorative stone and gablet features would be retained to the front elevation, the proposal would result in the application of brick-effect render finish. This finish would not replicate the bricks as present, but be a mock finish applied to silicone (or similar) render. The resultant appearance would be one of a 'clean' finish which is at odds with the historic brick style/size of the application property and those which surround it. It is therefore considered that this would result in an incongruous and alien element within the streetscene.

With regards to the rear, the proposal seeks the application of a cream dashed (i.e pebble dashed mock) finish. This would be readily visible from the public realm owing to the open nature of the rear area of the site. Within this streetscene (Star Road) it is acknowledged that there are some examples of rendered or painted properties. However these are not within the immediate vicinity and the properties are not of the status of the application property. Accordingly, it is considered that this would appear wholly at odds with the character of the locality, resulting in the complete loss of the historic character of the application property. Officer's have given consideration to the application of an alternative finish (such as brick effect render) however owing to the concerns expressed in the preceding paragraph, it is considered that this would give rise to a similar level of harm.

On this basis of the above, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and is therefore contrary to Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

c) Planning balance

It is acknowledged that the proposal would accord with the Council and Government's aspirations to move towards a low carbon future, by improving the energy efficiency of the property and reducing carbon emission rates, and that this should be afforded substantial weight. However it is considered that the harm that would result to the character and

appearance of the streetscene, through the loss of the historic features of the application property, would outweigh this harm. Accordingly, on balance the proposal is unacceptable.

6 Conclusions

The proposal is unacceptable having been assessed in light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and for the specific reasons given below.

7 Recommendation

The Director of Growth and Regeneration recommends that Planning Permission is **REFUSED** for the following reason:

- R 1 The proposed external insulation would result in the loss of the existing original brick appearance of the application property. Given the unique design and character of the property, and its prominent position within the streetscene, the application of the proposed insulation to the front and elevations would appear an incongruous and alien element. The proposal would result in unacceptable impact upon the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area which is not outweighed by the benefit arising from improved energy efficiency. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

Copy to Cllr Iqbal, Cllr Johnson and Cllr Shabbir