
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 May 2025

by **T Bennett BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 MAY 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/25/3360595

32 – 33 Nightingale Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1QU

- 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 Nav Nagra c/o R A Morgan (Elec) Ltd against the decision of North Herts Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02370/FP.
 - The development proposed is the installation of external insulation and cladding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of external insulation and cladding at 32 – 33 Nightingale Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1QU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/02370/FP and subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan and Proposed Elevations - 44471_02 Rev 01.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal is retrospective. At the time of my site visit the works had already substantially started.
3. The description of development in the banner heading and formal decision has been amended, removing reference to the development having already been carried out, as this is superfluous, and does not describe an act of development.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the cladding on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site relates to a three storey building in a prominent position in front of a mini-roundabout, on Nightingale Road which forms part of the A505, a main throughfare in Hitchin.
6. The appeal property is in mixed use, with commercial on the ground floor and residential on the two floors above. Further properties in mixed use are sited west of the appeal site and on the opposite side of the road, with residential uses beyond.

7. Prior to the installation of the external cladding, the exterior of the appeal property was originally red brick. Whilst traditional brickwork is a common feature within the wider streetscene, properties in the immediate vicinity vary in form and scale and exhibit a wide variety of external finishes. This includes full and part render, mock Tudor, hung tile, full and part painted brickwork and original brickwork. Ground floor shop frontages also vary in colour, including black, red, white, cream and grey. The variety and colour of finishes contributes to and forms part of the character and appearance of the area.
8. Insulation, finished in a grey weatherboard cladding, has been installed to the exterior of the appeal property, concealing large parts of the original red brickwork. Whilst no other properties exhibit weatherboarding, this does not automatically mean the material is inappropriate. Parts of the original brickwork would remain visible on the side elevation fronting Florence Street. Given the surrounding context that I have already set out, the weatherboard, including its colour, does not unacceptably jar with the existing features on the host property, including the mansard roof and ground floor shop frontage. With the variety of external finishes and colours on buildings in the locality, the weatherboarding does not appear unsympathetic or incongruous within the street scene and does not harm the character and appearance of the area or the host property.
9. For the reasons above, I conclude that the cladding does not harm the character and appearance of the area and host property. Accordingly, there is no conflict with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. This, amongst other matters, requires development to respond positively to the site's local context.

Other Matter

10. I have no substantive evidence that the weatherboard has had an adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents. As such, I afford this limited weight.

Conditions

11. As the development has already commenced the standard time limit condition is not necessary. For certainty, a plans condition is necessary.

Conclusion

12. In conclusion, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

T Bennett

INSPECTOR