

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made 12 July 2023

**By Ruth Reed BA DipArch MA PGCertEd PPRIBA HonAIA FRIAS**

An Independent Scheme of Management Inspector  
Appointed by the Heritage Foundation Letchworth Garden City

Decision date 20 July 2023

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## **Appeal Reference RR/2023/016**

### **5 The Dale, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 3SG**

- The appeal is made by \_\_\_\_\_ against refusal of consent under the Scheme of Management of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the application submitted on 9 August 2022.
  - Consent for the scheme was refused in part by the Heritage Foundation's Householder Applications Committee on 23 September 2022. It was reviewed by the Advisory Management Committee on 19 January 2023 and the decision to refuse in part was upheld.
  - The development proposed is external wall cladding.
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## **Decision**

1. The appeal against the refusal of part of an application for external wall cladding is dismissed.

## **Preliminary matters**

2. The original application was for proposed rear single storey extension, roof alterations, rear fence panels and external insulation. The wall cladding was refused in a split decision and is the subject of this appeal.
3. At the site visit the appellant stated that he wished to limit the appeal to the side elevations only. Although this reduces the scope of the appeal, it does not introduce additional changes that have not been considered by the Heritage Foundation, therefore I have determined the appeal on the basis of the side elevations only.
4. At the site visit the appellant was offered the opportunity to submit further technical details in support of his appeal but none were received.

5. Reference has been made by the appellant to the national and local planning context, and case studies prepared by English Heritage in 2014. These provide useful background however the decision is made solely on the basis of the Design Principles set out by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation which generally indicate what and will not be acceptable. However, each case is made on its own merits based on the character of the property and its context. The decision is based on the Guidance for Heritage Character Areas.

## **Main Issues**

6. The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposed external wall cladding to the character and appearance of the house itself, and the character of the area.

## **Reasons**

7. 5 The Dale is a detached bungalow. It is situated in a Heritage Character Area and is a Home of Special Interest. It has a brick front elevation with hanging plain tiles to the gable and rendered side elevations.
8. The insulated external cladding would be applied to the two side elevations across the original house walls and the side walls of the rear extension. The cladding would be approximately 100mm thick. At the corners with the front elevation brick slips would be applied to the cladding to continue the brickwork on the front and replicate the quoins on the side walls.
9. It is not possible to assess how the brick slips would appear adjacent to those on the front elevation because details of the slips and their jointing have not been provided. Beyond the quoins the cladding to the side walls would be rendered in roughcast.
10. The effect of the cladding would be to increase the width and change the proportions of the front elevation and consequently the appearance of the bungalow making it out of character with the rest of the street, especially with the bungalows of the same house type.
11. The appellant was unable to provide details of the methods of dressing the cladding around the windows, including whether the windows would remain in their current positions and the sills extended to cover the cladding or brought forward into the zone of the cladding.
12. If the windows are to remain in their existing positions, they would be deep set from the face of the wall. This would be a departure from the appearance

of the other bungalows on the street and would have a negative effect on the Home of Special Interest and the character of the area.

13. Fitting the 100mm wall cladding would reduce the depth of the eaves and the soffit boards. The appellant stated that the soffit boards would be replaced to ensure that the ventilation holes were not covered by the cladding.
14. Reducing the depth of the eaves overhang would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the bungalow in the context of the street. Other existing bungalows of this house type have large eaves overhangs in the Arts and Craft style that is the predominant character of the Heritage Character Area.
15. The appellant was unable to provide details of how the services on and adjacent to the side walls would be accommodated when the cladding was in place. These services are already in place on the existing walls and include an electric vehicle charging point, external electric sockets, rainwater down pipes, soil vent pipes, gas pipes and meter box, and an electric meter box.
16. The appellant was unable to say if the services would be relocated to the face of the new cladding with the necessary adjustment to the ground level junctions. The alternative would seem to be to cut the cladding around the services. Without this information it is not possible to determine the effect of the changes on the appearance of the building.
17. The appellant has provided technical information from the manufacturer of the cladding but was unable to say if had been proven not to have a deleterious effect on the fabric of the existing walls. The surveyor's report provided by the appellant stresses the need to allow the existing brickwork to breath however it is not clear how the proposed cladding system would achieve this.
18. Work that could lead to the deterioration of the external fabric of a Home of Special Interest would be against the Design Principles which seek to preserve these homes.
19. Improving the performance of the fabric of homes is highly desirable in the move to reduce the use of fossil fuels. The Design Principles accommodate a number of ways this can be achieved but are explicit that external cladding is not acceptable on Homes of Special Interest. It was noted that the appellant has fitted internal wall insulation to improve his home's performance.
20. There have been changes to the appearance of the other bungalows on the street since they were constructed 100 years ago, however none of them have external cladding applied. The appeal proposal would be a departure from the appearance of the area and an unacceptable change to the character of the Heritage Character Area.

## **Conclusions**

21. Having read the submissions and seen the site and its context, I conclude the application of external cladding to the side elevations of the bungalow would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the Home of Special Interest and would not be in accordance with the Design Principles. The negative impact on the street scene would not be in accordance with the Design Principles for Heritage Character Areas. The appeal is dismissed.

*Ruth Reed*

Independent Scheme of Management Inspector