

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 March 2017

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/D/17/3168781

5 Baptist Fold, Queensbury, Bradford BD13 2AF

- 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 Mrs Sharon Ciccone against the decision of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/08821/HOU was refused by notice dated 24 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is the installation of new composite front door with UPVC frame and new windows to front of property and UPVC windows and doors to rear. All shaping of windows and doorframes to remain the same.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The proposal is to replace the front and rear timber windows of the appeal property with uPVC equivalents together with a new composite front door with a uPVC frame. While few design details of the new replacements have been provided, the appellant states that the new windows would broadly resemble those of a property shown in a submitted photograph. Both the new windows and doors would also be shaped to fit the existing openings within the host building. I have proceeded on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end terrace property within a former school building that is now in residential use within the Queensbury Conservation Area (CA). The CA covers the core of the village and contains a mix of historic buildings, many of which are of natural stone and slate construction and appear to date mostly from the Victorian period. From the inscription given on its flank wall, the appeal building is one such example.
 5. According to the Council, the appeal property is identified within its CA Assessment as a key unlisted building within the CA. I share that opinion. To my mind, the architectural and historic interest of the appeal building stems, in part, from its simple design, traditional materials and fenestration, with a
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rhythmic series of long, twin round-headed windows in both the front and rear elevations. At the front, there is additionally a doorway with a fanlight transom in between each pair of windows. Consequently, the appeal building significantly adds to the character and appearance of the CA, which can be seen and appreciated from the road in front of the site and from Chapel Lane, beyond the rear of the property. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6. From the information provided, the new windows would have thicker sections and so they would not replicate the slim frame profiles of the existing timber framed windows. The proposed replacement frames would also lack the detailing of their timber counterparts. Moreover, the man-made material for the new doors and windows would draw the eye due to its smooth engineered finish, which would noticeably contrast with the less even appearance of timber frames in the other openings of the appeal building and the rough texture of the natural stonewalls. This would be discernable especially at the front where the new windows and door would be visible close-up. In these views, the stark and rather mechanical finish of uPVC would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal building. In doing so, the proposal would reduce the positive contribution of the building to the CA and thus have a deleterious effect on the character and appearance of this heritage asset, which would fail to be preserved. I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm.
7. At the site visit, I saw that uPVC and aluminium replacement windows have been used extensively throughout the CA, including several buildings around the site, to which the appellant has referred and provided photographs. However, many of those cases serve to demonstrate the harm that insensitive or unsympathetic replacement windows can cause. The most pleasing buildings are those that have retained their original features, including their windows and doors. It is these buildings that make the greatest contribution to heritage significance and thus should be preserved.
8. With technological advances, the latest uPVC framed windows and composite doors might be of better design quality than those examples that have been installed in the area. Nonetheless, I am not persuaded that this is sufficient reason to accept the loss of the existing windows and doors, which are integral to the appeal building's character. Despite the number of uPVC replacement windows and doors local to the site, traditional timber windows and doors remain a common characteristic of many buildings within the CA. They are, therefore, an important part of its special architectural or historic interest.
9. Where the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset is less than substantial, as would be the case here, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits. I am not persuaded that the public benefits in this case would outweigh the harm that I have identified.
10. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. Of those policies identified by the Council, the appeal scheme would conflict with Policies UR3, D1 and BH7 of the Council's Replacement Unitary Development Plan.

These policies seek to ensure that development achieves high quality design that relates well to the character of the locality in terms of design and materials and also protects the heritage of the area.

11. It would also be at odds with the Framework, which places great importance on the design of the built environment and on the conservation of heritage assets such as conservation areas. The Framework also states that planning decisions should aim to ensure that development adds to the qualities of an area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR