
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 23 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/17/3168947

1-2 Downsland Parade, Basingstoke RG21 8TX

- 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 Madham against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01979/FUL, dated 31 May 2015, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a replacement shopfront, replacement signs, new side storage area and new toilet to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have also dealt with another appeal¹ on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision. Whilst the application form for this appeal includes details of the advertisements related to the shop signage, they are the subject of separate control. I have dealt only with the shopfront and extensions of the proposal. Advertisement consent has not been granted, however, it does not influence the matters in this appeal.
3. At the time of my visit, the shopfront works appeared complete and the side and rear extensions had not been implemented. For the avoidance of doubt, I have based my decision on the drawings accompanying the application.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host building and the Brookvale West Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. The shop in this appeal is one of several on the ground floor of a 1930s shopping parade, which includes two storeys of residential accommodation above. It is set back from the main road by a small service run-in for access and parking.
6. Downsland Parade is an interesting, freestanding building sited between two side roads off the busy Worting Road into Basingstoke. While it differs

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/17/3169126

stylistically from the surrounding suburban housing of the CA which is more traditional including gabled bays, clay tiling and timber detailing, its building line, scale, and brickwork are similar. Commanding the vista at the end of Alexandra Road, it stands out as a landmark in the street scene, in which its contrasting design and quality detailing enriches the character and appearance of the CA.

7. Its design reflects that of the Art Deco Movement with a flat roof and curved, stepped, and set-back return elevations to the side roads. The detailing of the upper floors is distinctive with a streamlining upper cornice, ladder windows, and double height bays with curved glass corners and decorative animal motif infill panels. The shops on the ground floor are set between rendered surrounds. Some retain a stall riser and some timber framing to the openings and fanlights whose proportions and subdivision reflect the pattern of transoms and mullions in the residential windows above. Described in the Council's CA Appraisal 2003 as one of four key individual buildings that make a significant individual contribution to Brookvale in terms of their appearance, historic value or their position in the street scene, its contribution to the character and townscape of the whole CA is significant.
8. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This is reflected in Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) adopted 2016 (LP), which also requires development affecting heritage assets to respect the historic form, setting and fabric that contribute to the significance of the host building, and to ensure the use of appropriate materials, design and detailing. Its Policy EM10 requires development to contribute to local distinctiveness, the sense of place and the street scene, and for it to have regard to the architectural detailing and materials and history of the surrounding area.
9. The splayed general arrangement of the shopfront reflects the shop at the opposite end of the Parade, No5. However, whereas some of the other shop frontages have their upper transoms set at door head height, at around one-fifth of the height of the opening, which reflects the sub-division of the windows above the shops, the fanlight section in this frontage is comparatively narrow, set well above the door head. This results in the proportion of the fanlight section being uncharacteristically narrow. The stall riser is also comparatively shorter than those in the other shops and is recessed rather than flush. It has a similar, disruptive effect on the fenestration pattern of the building. The grey colour of the framing conflicts with the framing colour of the other openings in the front elevation which are white. The metal material of the framing lacks the modelling and unevenness of the painted timber finish of the frames in the other shops, which add character to the elevation.
10. I have taken into account the shopfront installed at the shop adjacent, No3; however, it bears even less resemblance to the prevailing design of the shopfronts at No4 and No5 than this development, and reflects the design and detailing of the rest of the building even less. The Council has explained that the shopfront of No3 was in place at the time the area was given the status as a conservation area. It is clear from the CA Appraisal that it is the whole building which is significant in the CA, and there remains sufficient architectural

integrity in the whole which makes No3 an isolated example which does not justify this development.

11. I note that the appellant claims the removed shopfront was metal. However, there is no evidence to support this, whereas the Council's evidence shows that the design of the previous shopfront reflected many of the features of the shop at the opposite end of the Parade and was far more sensitive to the architectural character of the building. In any event, whether the previous shopfront was of timber or of metal, much of the harm I have identified relates to the design of the replacement shopfront in terms of the arrangement of transoms, the proportions of the openings, and the height of the stall riser, as well as the colour of the framing, which the appellant acknowledges was white in the previous shop front.
12. I conclude against the shopfront that its design causes significant harm to the appearance of the Parade. It undermines the overall architectural integrity of the building and the townscape characteristics which make it a prominent example of an Art Deco shopping parade.
13. I appreciate the Council's comments about the symmetry of the building and the potential for a side extension to disrupt its balance. However, the proposed extension would be set clear of the opening of the shopfront and back from the front line of the building. It would also be partially screened behind shrubs and street furniture including a telephone box, post boxes, a clothes recycling chamber and advertising panels.
14. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would have a presence in the street scene and would be conspicuous as a part of the main building. In this context, and given the design of the Parade, it would bear no relation to the distinctive architecture of the building. Its right-angled front corner would conflict with the curved sweep of the returning elevation of the building above it. It would lack the streamlining cornice, and its fascia-boarded eaves would be at odds with the sleeker parapet of the main building. It is unclear whether the ladder window in the side elevation would need to be filled, however, provided this were filled sensitively, there would be no overall negative impact on the appearance of the building.
15. Regarding the extension for a toilet to the rear of the building, given the service yard aspect of the rear area, the presence of such a modest scaled form would not disrupt the order and balance in the rear elevation. The neighbouring door openings in the rear elevation include thin concrete canopies which project beyond the supporting wall. Provided the detailing of the toilet extension was sensitive to the other projecting elements in the rear elevation, and the removed window sensitively infilled, which could be secured by a condition for drawn details, I can identify no harm to the character or appearance of the host building or the CA from this element of the proposal.
16. The contribution that the development would make towards the economic and social dimension of sustainable development through construction activity and additional space would be modest. Although any harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial, it would be a noticeable and significant, adverse impact, by virtue of the positive contribution that the building makes to the Conservation Area. This harm would not be outweighed by any public benefits in the scheme. It would not be the sustainable development for which

the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that there is a presumption in favour.

17. I conclude that the appeal proposal would harm the character and the appearance of the host building and the character and the appearance of the Brookvale West Conservation Area. It would conflict with LP Policies EM10 and EM11. It would fail to preserve the Brookvale West Conservation Area in accordance with the requirements of section 72 of the Act, the special attention to which, the Courts have determined, I am required to give considerable importance and weight.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons above and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR