

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 06 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/16/3162346

3 Balgores Lane, Romford RM2 5JR

- 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 Mr Ken Rhodes, Ken Rhodes Window Co against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1252.16, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "replacing existing crittle windows with new thermally efficient aluminium crittle lookalike windows."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application was accompanied by an extract from a specification for a Steel Replacement Window System. However the application form and accompanying quotation specify aluminium windows. The Council considered the proposal on that basis and so have I.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the proposed replacement windows would have on the character and appearance of the host property and the Gidea Park Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is one of a pair of buildings with shops at ground floor and their situation close to the junction of Balgores Lane and Main Road gives them a high degree of prominence in the streetscene. The pair are symmetrical and share a considerable uniformity in appearance and detailing which includes their delicately proportioned metal framed windows at first floor level. These have a painted finish and have the same number and arrangement of panes divided by slender glazing bars, although I observed that there are subtle differences in the configuration of the opening arrangements of the bay windows in each property.
 5. The Conservation Area covers an extensive area and predominantly comprises houses from the early decades of the C20 in a garden suburb layout which also includes commercial areas, including that in the vicinity of the appeal site. As
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noted in the Character Appraisal¹ the overall design of buildings varies but the form, scale, materials and architectural detailing of these buildings have much in common. These, along with the area's layout, are defining features of the Conservation Area's character and appearance, and hence its significance. The appeal building shares some of these characteristics and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area's character and appearance as a result.

6. The Council accept that aluminium frames can exhibit similar qualities to steel windows. However, the illustrations of the proposed windows on the appellant's quotation show a materially different configuration to the existing arrangement with a greater number of panes running both horizontally and vertically in each window and markedly thicker frames serving the opening casements. Further, it is not clear whether the existing deeper section of the transom on the windows would be replicated.
7. These differences would be conspicuous and the windows would appear overly prominent and inappropriate compared to the existing arrangement. They would render the fenestration and consequently the first floor appearance of the building unbalanced in the context of the adjoining property in the pair. They would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the Conservation Area as a result. The desirability of preserving or enhancing such attributes is something to which I have paid special attention and I have attached considerable importance and weight to this harm.
8. I can appreciate that the proposed windows may offer improved thermal efficiency over the existing windows which the appellant considers to be in disrepair. However there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed arrangement would be the only way to address the repair of the windows or achieve the efficiency benefits. Whilst the harm to the Conservation Area's significance would be less than substantial given the proposal's scale, these benefits would not outweigh that harm.
9. The proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy² Policies DC61 and DC68 which require development to preserve, enhance or improve the character and appearance of the local area, including that of Conservation Areas. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ London Borough of Havering - Gidea Park Conservation Area, Character Appraisal and Management Proposals.

² Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, 2008.