
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2017

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/W/17/3167476
51 Green Street, Morecambe, LA4 5HN

- 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 Sharpe against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01400/FUL, dated 31 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as “replacement windows and doors”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are, firstly, whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Morecambe Conservation Area and, secondly, the effect of the development on the settings of the Grade II listed former Art and Technical School, Central Methodist Church, and Mona House.

Reasons

Conservation area

3. The appeal property is located within the Morecambe Conservation Area, which encompasses the historic core of the town. Morecambe grew as a seaside resort in the nineteenth century and much of the conservation area dates from this period. During that time, orderly ribbons of terraces were developed as guesthouses on streets running inland from the waterfront. These contain many strong Victorian architectural details such as the repetition of the canted bay windows on ground and first floors. The appeal building is part of one such terrace, and it clearly makes a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area.
 4. The conservation area appraisal identifies painted timber sliding sash windows as an element of the area’s architectural character. The appeal building has retained traditional timber windows to both the front and rear. The replacement of these windows with modern bulky uPVC frames would erode the historic character of the building, and would diminish its contribution to this part of the conservation area. Given that the frontage of the appeal building is immediately adjacent to the street, the uPVC door and windows would be particularly prominent. In addition, the rear of the building backs onto a car
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park and a square and is highly visible in the surrounding area. Accordingly, the replacement of the rear windows and door with uPVC would harm the appearance of the building and the historic townscape when viewed from Clarence Street and from the Square.

5. Whilst some of the properties in the terrace already have uPVC windows, the Council state that these were installed either without planning permission or under permitted development rights. This has not been disputed by the appellant. Whilst the appeal building may have a different appearance to adjoining properties that have installed uPVC windows and doors, that does not provide a justification for the further erosion of historic fabric. I further note that some properties in the terrace have retained traditional timber windows, as have those in the terrace to the east on the opposite side of Green Street. Whilst the appellant suggests that horns could be installed to the proposed windows, that would not overcome my concerns in this case.
6. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. This harm would be less than substantial when considered against paragraphs 132 – 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). However, there are no public benefits that would outweigh the harm to the conservation area in this case.
7. I conclude that the development would be contrary to Policies DM31 and DM35 of the Lancaster Development Management DPD (2014). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development preserves the historic environment and makes a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape. It would also be at odds with guidance in the Framework relating to designated heritage assets.

Setting of the listed buildings

8. The appeal property is located close to 3 Grade II listed buildings. One of these is the nearby former Art and Technical School, which is an imposing red brick structure, in a baroque style, that dates from the early twentieth century. It is positioned next to several road junctions and areas of open land that afford it significant prominence in the surrounding area. The appeal building backs onto a car park and a square that are adjacent to the former Art and Technical School. It is part of the historic townscape that forms the backdrop to views of the listed building from Clarence Street and the square. The frontage of the appeal building is also prominent in views of the listed building as it is approached along Green Street. In this context, the replacement of the traditional timber windows and door with uPVC would negatively affect important views of the listed building, and the way it is experienced from both Clarence Street and Green Street. This would be harmful to its setting in my view.
9. The Central Methodist Church is located on Green Street, approximately 75 metres to the north west of the appeal building. It is a large sandstone Victorian structure that is hemmed in by terraced properties along the narrow streets that surround it. It is an attractive building that includes a decorative portico with 2 round arches fronting onto Green Street. The appeal building forms part of one of the terraces on the approach to the listed building from the south east. However, it is some distance from the listed building and has only a very limited visual relationship with it. In this regard, an existing building on the south eastern side of the junction between Townley Street and

Green Street heavily restricts views between the properties. Accordingly, I do not consider that the development would negatively affect the setting of the Central Methodist Church.

10. Mona House is located at the junction between Deansgate and Moss Lane. It is an early nineteenth century sandstone property with a symmetrical composition. The doorways have external stone steps and a semi-circular head with moulded archivolt. The property is some distance from the appeal building, and is not directly visible from it. It is located in a different context within narrow residential streets that are predominantly 2 storeys in height. There is almost no visual relationship between the properties. Accordingly, I do not consider that the development would negatively affect the setting of Mona House.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would negatively affect the setting of the Grade II listed former Art and Technical School. This harm would be less than substantial when considered against paragraphs 132 – 134 of the Framework. However, there are no public benefits that would outweigh this harm.
12. I conclude that the development would be contrary to Policy DM32 of the Lancaster Development Management DPD (2014). This policy seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that new development preserves the historic environment and makes a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape. It would also be at odds with guidance in the Framework relating to designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

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

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR