
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE

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

Decision date: 25 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/17/3171797

Harrow High School, Gayton Road, Harrow HA1 2JG

- 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 Shelley Simpson (Harrow High School) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4368/16, dated 24 June 2015, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as proposals to replace the existing timber framed windows to 6 of the elevations with aluminium powder coated double glazed units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement and installation of new windows to elevations fronting Gayton Road and Sheepcote Road at Harrow High School, Gayton Road, Harrow HA1 2JG , in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: P/4368/16, dated 24 June 2015, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A011 – Location Plan; A010 – Site Plan; A009 – Existing Second and Third Floor Plan; A008 – Existing First Floor Plan; A007 – Existing Ground Floor Plan; A006 – Proposed Elevation Three; A006 – Proposed Elevation Three (Revised) Windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the series 1 to 6; A005 – Proposed Elevation Two; A005- Proposed Elevation Two (Revised) Windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the series 1 to 6; A004 – Proposed Elevation One; A004 – Proposed Elevation One (Revised) Windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 in the series 1 to 9; A003 – Existing Elevation Three; A003 – Existing Elevation Three (Revised) Windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the series 1 to 6; A002 – Existing Elevation Two; A002 – Existing Elevation Two (Revised) windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the series 1 to 6; A001 – Existing Elevation One; A001 – Existing Elevation One (Revised) Windows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 in the series 1 to 9.
 - 3) The windows shall be replaced on a like-for-like basis: the new windows and the individual panes shall replicate those they replace in terms of configuration, dimensions and proportions. No development shall take place until details of the replacement window frames have been
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submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include particulars of the dimensions and profiles of all framing and glazing bars, samples of which shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval prior to installation. The windows shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council changed the description of application Ref P/4368/16 from that contained on the application form to 'replacement and installation of new windows to elevations fronting Gayton Road and Sheepcote Road'. This is a more accurate description of the development proposed which I have therefore used in this decision.
3. There appears to be some discrepancy in the plans that were submitted by the appellant in this appeal and those that were considered by the Council in the determination of the planning application. I have no evidence to suggest that some of the plans provided by the appellant in this appeal were formally considered by the Council. I have determined this appeal solely on the basis of the plans that were considered by the Council.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Locally Listed non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

5. The appeal property comprises a school, located in a prominent position at the junction of Sheepcote Road with Gayton Road. It was originally constructed in 1890 and is designated on the Council's Local Heritage List as a non-designated heritage asset.
6. The existing windows on the windows on the Sheepcote Road and Gayton Road elevations comprise predominantly of timber sash single glazed units although the ground floor windows have been replaced with uPVC/aluminium double glazed units and as such these elevations display a mixture of frame materials and single and double glazing.
7. The school has had several extensions which have uPVC/aluminium double glazed windows. In addition, in 2016 planning permission was granted (Ref P/0670/16) for substantial window replacement programme. The Council indicates that this provided for replacement windows on elevations not facing main roads with aluminium powder coated double glazed units with the remaining units facing the road to be provided with timber replacements.
8. I observed at my site visit that the replacement of the windows in those elevations not directly facing the road appeared to have been implemented. However, the windows on Sheepcote Road and Gayton Road elevations have not been replaced. The appeal proposal is to replace the windows in these elevations with aluminium powder coated double glazed units.
9. The heritage asset as a whole has a mixture of wood, uPVC/aluminium double glazed units and single glazed metal frame units. However, uPVC/aluminium appears to be the predominant material throughout the school. I observed that views of the expanse of uPVC/aluminium windows recently installed on the

rear elevations of the school were attainable from Kenton Road on its approach to the roundabout. In such long distance views these windows appeared virtually indistinguishable from the timber versions found on the upper floor of the Sheepcote Road and Gayton Road elevations.

10. The windows that have been replaced are a good approximation of the originals in terms of proportions and detailing. The differences between the wood and uPVC/aluminium frames are only apparent on close inspection. I do not believe that these differences would be noticed by the casual observer.
11. I have taken into account the advice provided in the Historic England document 'Traditional Windows, Their Care, Repair and Upgrading'. Whilst I recognise the contribution that traditional windows make to the significance of heritage assets, in this case the asset as a whole has a large proportion of uPVC/aluminium framed windows with mixtures of window frame materials in the same elevations. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a relevant extract from the Historic England document which states that '*In cases where the significance of the building has already been harmed by the installation of replacement windows of inappropriate character, consideration may be given to the installation of new slim-profile double-glazed replacement windows....*'
12. In this case the contribution that wooded framed windows would have made to the significance of the heritage asset has already been lost on several elevations. The appeal proposals would bring some degree of homogeneity to the building as a whole. In the light of what I saw on the elevations where windows have been replaced, I am satisfied that, provided care is taken with the detailed design of the new frames to ensure a good match with the timber versions, there is no reason why uPVC/aluminium windows on these two elevations should harm the character or appearance of the non-designated heritage asset, particularly as these elevations already contain such materials.
13. To my mind no significant aesthetic benefit would be achieved if windows of contrasting materials were to feature in the same elevations and in this case I am not convinced that the proposed frames would appear unduly heavy or different in proportion to the existing wooden frames. Furthermore, the standard profiling would be similar to the other windows in the school. Overall whilst uPVC/aluminium material is not normally favoured in heritage assets, given the extent of replacement of frames undertaken to date, it would not harm the significance of this heritage asset in this location.
14. On this basis, I am not persuaded that the proposal would detract from the character or appearance of the host property to an extent that would cause demonstrable harm to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset. As such, I see no conflict with Policies 7.4B, 7.6B and 7.8C and 7.8D of the London Plan (2016), Policies CS1B and CS1D of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) and Policies DM1 and DM7 of the Harrow Development Management Policies (2011). These policies, amongst other things, require development to respond positively to the local historic context, use materials that compliment architectural character and not cause harm to the significance of a heritage asset. In addition, the proposal would not be at odds with the principle of conserving the historic environment as set out in paragraphs 131 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other matters

15. The appellant has provided extracts from a condition survey relating to the existing wooden frames. Whilst I accept the Council's view that these are capable of repair, I recognise the appellants concerns regarding the longer term maintenance cost of the windows. Although I recognise the need for public bodies to demonstrate value for money, I am not persuaded that this factor has any significant weight in the consideration of the planning merits of the proposal.
16. I have also taken into account the concerns of local residents regarding noise and disturbance generated from activities in the school outside of the opening hours. These concerns relate to operational matters at the school which are not before me in the determination of this appeal relating to replacement windows. However, it does appear to me that the replacement of single glazed units with double glazed would have the potential to reduce some of the noise that currently travels through the existing wooden frame windows.

Conditions

17. Although the Council has not suggested any conditions, in addition to the standard time limit condition, I consider it necessary to impose a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is in the interests of certainty.
18. In order to protect the character and appearance of the host building, I have also imposed a condition concerning the design details of the proposed windows. Given the designation of the host building as a non-designated heritage asset, I consider that it would be appropriate in this case for this matter to be dealt with by means of a pre-commencement condition.

Conclusion

19. For the above reasons, taking into account the development plan as a whole based on the evidence before me and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR