
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2017

by Claire Victory BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 January 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/W/17/3181233

82 High Street, Great Wakering, Essex SS3 0EJ

- 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 Michael Craddock against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00207/FUL, dated 27 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is replace existing shop window and door to front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant's grounds of appeal notes that they wish to propose the use of UPVC rather than powder coated aluminium as specified in the planning application, for the replacement shop window and door. As the dimensions of the proposed replacement shop window and door would be the same as that originally proposed, and the Council has had an opportunity to comment on the alteration to the proposed material, I do not consider any party would be prejudiced by my consideration of the appeal proposal on the same basis.
3. The Decision Notice refers to Policy CP2 of the Rochford Local Plan but the Council's submission confirms the policy is within the Core Strategy adopted in 2011.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in the appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Wakering Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. No 82 is an end-terrace property forming part of a terrace of 9 two storey cottages within the High Street, built in approximately 1873. The appeal site lies within the Great Wakering Conservation Area, which encompasses the historic core of the village. The Great Wakering Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (GWCAAMP) (2007) describes the subject terrace as a prominent feature of the High Street and an important element in its special character. The brick cottages in the subject terrace have either rendered or painted brick elevations and the doors and windows are varied in design and material, including painted timber sash windows. More than half of the

properties have UPVC frames, including first floor windows in the front elevation of the appeal property.

6. Whilst the appeal property is the only commercial property within the subject terrace, there are a number of commercial units in the vicinity including a public house, café and pharmacy. Many of the buildings in the surrounding area, including modern development such as the flats at Southgate Mews to the south of the site have timber door and window frames, which make a positive contribution to the traditional character of the village. Further to the above, the Council's Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas (SPD6) (2007) identifies that window alterations within the conservation area are prominent and further proposals require careful consideration.
7. The loss of the traditional timber shopfront and doors, where a number have already been lost would cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In regard to the proposed use of UPVC, I accept that there is a mix of timber frames and UPVC within the terrace, but this should not be used to justify the further erosion of the traditional character of the area through the introduction of non-sympathetic materials. As such the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Wakering Conservation Area, contrary to Policy CP2 of the Rochford District Core Strategy (2011).
8. Given the size and scale of the proposal I consider it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area. Nevertheless I have placed considerable importance and weight on the harm that would be caused to the designated heritage asset. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, I have weighed any public benefits of the proposal with the harm that would be caused to the significance of the conservation area. The appellant has stated that the cost of replacing the shop front and door with timber would be prohibitive for the occupants of the shop as a charity. However, whilst I have some sympathy with these considerations, they are not sufficient to overcome the harm that would be caused by the proposed permanent change to the appearance of the property. It would therefore fail to accord with national policy.
9. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Claire Victory

INSPECTOR