



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2019

By Mr A Thickett BA(Hons) BTP Dip RSA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/Y/18/3217191

Ancaster Hall, 13 Ermine Street, Ancaster, Lincolnshire, NG32 3PW

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by DB Lawrence and Associates Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S18/1224, dated 22 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2018.
 - The work proposed is to replace 2 double glazed timber windows within attic to double glazed uPVC.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The plan of the window details submitted with the appeal application is dated December 1992, it shows the frames to be timber and annotates the frame as 'New Hardwood Frame Window'¹. This was questioned with the appellant who stated that the *'application documentation, including the supporting planning statement makes clear that the replacement windows will comprise upvc units to the same detail as that illustrated on the 1991 plans but using upvc in lieu of timber'*. I will return to this later.
3. The appeal also is supported by photographs of a stock uPVC window and a sample window was available at the site visit. The visit was conducted on a 'access required' basis. The appellant argues that an accompanied site visit would have enabled all parties to be present when the sample was inspected. The presentation of the sample represents the submission of evidence. The Council had not had the opportunity to comment on the sample and for that reason, I informed the appellant that it would not be appropriate for me to inspect it. Further, it is not possible to discuss the evidence or the merits of parties' cases at a site visit in a written representation appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed replacement windows would preserve the special character and interest of this Grade II* listed building.

¹ Drwg No. B184 24

Reasons

5. Ancaster Hall dates back to the 17th century with additions and alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. This substantial building, now converted to flats, is two storeys with rooms in the attic. It is built of dressed limestone rubble with ashlar quoins and dressings and plain tiled roof. A distinctive feature of the building is the stone balustrading to the front, which extends up to the highway, with the pedestrian footway running between the balustrading and the building. All the existing windows are timber with sash windows at ground and first floor in the front and south elevations. The windows in the gables are smaller and more utilitarian and there are 4 oval shaped windows in the north elevation. The building adjoins the church and is a significant feature both approaching Ancaster from the south or leaving from the north.
6. The windows it is proposed to be replaced were fitted in the 1990s when the property was converted to flats and sit in the attic gables in the side elevations. The appellant contends that: *'Given that the double glazed windows to be replaced are no more than 25 years old, and certainly post-date the listing of the building, they cannot be considered to represent a 'key feature of historic significance' (as argued by the Council).*
7. As the windows were fitted in the 1990s that must be so but they are timber, a material that has more in keeping with this 300 year old building than plastic. Although proposed as a like for like replacement, I agree with the Council that the existing frames are thicker than one would expect in a building of this age. Further, the existing chunky frames are not in keeping with the appearance of the finer details of the sash windows below.
8. As pointed out by Historic England, the material from which the frames are constructed make uPVC look different from timber and, in my experience, their plastic shiny white finish does not successfully replicate a painted timber finish. The photographs of the sample frames confirm this. As a result of their appearance and the use of a modern man made material which would be incongruous in this historic building, I consider that the proposed works would harm the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II* listed building.
9. Further, without proper details on a scaled drawing, I cannot be certain that the *'replacement windows will comprise upvc units to the same detail as that illustrated on the 1991 plans'*. This is a Grade II* listed building and it would not be appropriate to grant consent for works which are not properly detailed or to leave such detail to a condition.
10. I conclude that the proposed replacement windows would not preserve the special character and interest of this Grade II* listed building. That harm would be less than substantial and, in such circumstances, the National Planning Policy Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellant contends that the proposed windows would have better insulating properties and ensure that the flat can continue to be let but I have seen nothing to indicate that timber windows could not achieve similar results.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I find that the proposed replacement windows would not preserve the special character and interest of this Grade II* listed building. I conclude that the proposal conflicts with Policy EN1 of the South Kesteven Core Strategy, adopted 2010 and that the appeal should be dismissed.

Anthony Thickett

Inspector