



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 September 2019

by S Hanson BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/W/19/3230342

Flat 5, 8 Seymour Road, Mannamead, Plymouth PL3 5AS

- 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 Miss Dawn Leasure against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01692/FUL, dated 1 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'replacement of existing white painted wooden frame windows. To be replaced with white PVC windows and to replicate appearance of existing as close as possible. Existing are a mixture of Sash windows and casement windows. Existing windows in very poor condition and thermally inefficient and causing damage problems.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Mannamead Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, Flat 5, forms part of 8 Seymour Road (No 8) which is a substantial detached two-storey Victorian villa that has been sub-divided into six self-contained flats. Attached to the east side elevation of the villa is a smaller, modern building, also in flats and designated as 10 – 12 Seymour Road. Flat 5 is on the upper floor at the front of the building.
4. No 8 is a prominent feature in the street. The ground floor of the villa is partially screened from the road by a high stone wall and mature trees. The upper floor is clearly visible from nearby vantage points, although extended views are more restricted because of the mature trees that line the road. As these trees are primarily deciduous, views into the site would be enhanced during the winter months. Whilst the building is not listed it is within the Mannamead Conservation Area (CA).
5. The significance of this section of the CA lies mainly in its attractive large Victorian buildings, their street patterns and their remaining architectural and historic features. The appeal property forms part of a building that is grand and imposing with a complicated asymmetrical shape. Its painted walls are visually dominated by the large white quoins and the wealth of windows primarily in

- casement and sash form. The villa retains its architectural integrity and the historic presence of this large residence and its attributes add positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider CA.
6. The proposal would see the removal of nine white-painted timber sash and casement windows on the first floor flat to the front and side and their replacement with white timber-effect double-glazed uPVC windows. The existing painted timber windows are not original, many having been installed approximately 12 years ago. I have no doubt from the evidence before me that the existing windows are in poor condition. The Council consider their replacement to be acceptable in principle, and I have no basis on which to take a different stance.
 7. It is proposed to remove the existing timber windows and replace them with uPVC windows. The new windows would be set within the existing openings, and to that extent, they would reflect the character of the existing windows. However, uPVC is a synthetic material whose smooth, shiny, modern appearance would not satisfactorily capture the character of the painted timber finish that currently exists and would have typified the original windows. As a result, the scheme would appear discordant, and out of keeping with the natural traditional materials that are dominant within the facades of the building.
 8. I have been provided with comparative details of the existing and proposed windows, although no profile sections or dimensions have been provided. The drawings show that the new frames of the casements and sashes would be broader, and hence the glazed section would be reduced in size to compensate. The uPVC frames would be disproportionately large in comparison to the dimensions of the existing timber windows and would appear overly bulky within the modestly sized window openings. Cumulatively, these changes would result in windows whose unsympathetic materials would depart still further from the likely character of the original building. The proposed replacement windows would appear neither a harmonious or sympathetic addition and would detract from the positive contribution the building otherwise makes to the significance of the character and appearance of the CA.
 9. I acknowledge the appellant's intentions to use uPVC windows that would be of the "highest quality" and would "look identical". I also accept there would be some private benefits in terms of thermal efficiency, health and safety, durability and maintenance to the property from the double-glazed uPVC windows. However, whilst uPVC window design has improved over the years and detailing has become more refined and slimmer, the technical finish is still different to wood. This difference would be exacerbated by the number of the opening and the position of these openings on visually prominent elevations. Consequently, the significance of this historic asset would be eroded by allowing the replacement of timber windows with uPVC and the harm would be unacceptable.
 10. In the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm caused to the CA would be less than substantial. However, there are no identified wider public benefits that would outweigh the less than substantial harm that has been identified. This is a matter which weighs against allowing the development, noting that paragraph 193 of the

Framework states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

11. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy DEV21 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (2019) (JLP) insofar as it seeks the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The proposal would also be inconsistent with the conservation requirements of the Framework.

Other Matters

12. In reaching my conclusion, I have taken into account all of the other matters raised by the appellant and interested parties. These include high continued maintenance costs and the use of uPVC windows on other houses within the CA. I note the support for the appeal proposal by other residents and the overwhelming sense of integrity for the long-term care of the building. However, these have not led me to a different conclusion on the main issue of the appeal.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Hanson

INSPECTOR