

# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2019

**by K Savage BA MPlan MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 30 December 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/19/3235680**

**Flat 1, 28 Woodstock Road, Croydon CR0 1JR**

- 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 Tanya Ohadi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
  - The application Ref 19/00497/FUL, dated 30 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2019.
  - The development proposed was originally described as 'to double glaze my flat throughout to prevent condensation issues which currently occur.'
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matter

2. The initial description of development and other supporting statements by the appellant suggested that several windows within the flat were to be replaced. There was also confusion between the appellant's photographs focusing on the ground floor bay window, and the Council's description of the proposal as relating to the top floor flat. The appellant has subsequently confirmed that the flat is on the ground floor, and the proposal relates only to the bay window on the front elevation. I have duly considered the appeal on that basis.

## Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Chatsworth Road Conservation Area (the CRCA).

## Reasons

4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CRCA.
5. The Conservation Area Appraisal And Management Plan (October 2008) (CAAMP) describes the CRCA as containing a substantial grouping of late Victorian and Edwardian houses, many of which are of a high architectural quality and adorned with delicate and detailed decorative architectural features, which greatly enriches the overall character and appearance of the area. Woodstock Road is described as the most architecturally consistent road, with intact runs of semi-detached Victorian houses down both sides. On the road's south side, the houses are either red brick with stock brick dressings, or

in stock brick with red brick dressings. No 28 is one of the former and is described as a positive unlisted building.

6. The CAAMP further describes the generally good condition of dwellings, but that inappropriate minor development has occurred, affecting the area's special character, including replacement of traditional-style windows. The CAAMP advises that historic and traditional style windows should be retained and repaired due to the important contribution they make to the conservation area's special character, and that secondary glazing can be installed to improve thermal performance. Where replacements are necessary, these should be in the same materials.
7. The building at No 28 retains timber, sliding sashes to the bay windows at ground and first floor level. It is proposed to replace those within the ground floor bay with uPVC framed, double glazed windows. I saw that along the street, quite a number of windows have been replaced with plastic frames. Some of these have retained the sliding sash opening of the windows and have managed to competently match the frame size and pattern. Notwithstanding this, these windows are still identifiable by the double glazed panes, visible joints between the plastic sections and inevitable discolouration which occurs. Other examples I saw were more conspicuous due to a failure to replicate the original details of the windows, or where windows on only one floor have been changed, resulting in a disharmonious appearance. In general, the use of uPVC, given its artificial texture and more uniform finish, in comparison to painted timber windows, does not complement the traditional appearance of the buildings on the street.
8. I saw that, despite these examples, the street retains a large number of buildings with traditional timber windows, including the appeal site, which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the CRCA. The appeal submissions include only an unscaled sketch drawing and a generic brochure photo from a prospective manufacturer, neither of which adequately demonstrates the proposed appearance of the windows, their framing profile or pattern. In the absence of accurate details, I cannot be satisfied that the proposed replacement windows to the ground floor bay would in fact replicate those presently installed. In any event, uPVC frames to the ground floor would be identifiable in views from the street and would result in a discordant front elevation where the majority of the windows would remain in timber.
9. Whilst there are examples of plastic framed windows within the street, they are not sufficient to alter the overall traditional character and appearance of the CRCA, and do not justify the further erosion of that character and appearance by the proposed uPVC framed windows to the front of the appeal site.
10. For the reasons set out above, therefore, I find that the proposed replacement of the timber windows with uPVC windows to the front bay window at ground floor level would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CRCA. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Policies SP4.1, SP4.12, SP4.13, DM10.1, DM18.4 of the Croydon Local Plan (2013) and with Policies 7.4 and 7.8 of the London Plan (March 2016), which together seek high quality design and to conserve and enhance the Borough's heritage assets; and with the guidance of the CAAMP and the Conservation Area General Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (April 2013) with respect to proposed works within the CRCA.

11. When considered in light of the heritage asset as a whole, the impact of the proposal would be localised in nature and therefore I regard the harm as less than substantial within the meaning of Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This paragraph directs that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
12. The appellant submits that the proposed windows would provide increased energy efficiency to the flat. However, I have not been presented with substantive evidence to suggest that uPVC windows significantly outperform well installed and maintained timber windows in this regard, which could also be double glazed, or that the CAAMP option of secondary glazing has been explored. As such, I attribute only limited weight to this potential benefit.
13. The public benefits identified are not sufficient to outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm that would be caused by the proposal. The appeal scheme would be contrary to the development plan taken as a whole and material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate planning permission should be forthcoming in spite of this.

### **Conclusion**

14. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

*K Savage*

INSPECTOR