



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2020

by Alison Scott BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/19/3241711

15 Chains Drive, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5BP

- 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 Graham Dimmock against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02141/FUL, dated 3 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as Replace existing timber sash windows with sympathetic Upvc sash windows of similar proportions.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the replacement uPVC windows would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Corbridge Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached house fronting onto open space close to the centre of Corbridge. The development to which it is situated is a modern housing development of approximately 71 town houses, two-storey houses and flats, all sharing the same characteristics of facing stone, slate roof and timber sliding sash windows, or timber mock sash or casement windows.
4. The appeal site is located within Corbridge CA with a distinct eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century character wrapped around a medieval street pattern with views in and out of the CA controlled by the rising slopes and skylines of the Tyne Valley. Stone is the predominant material within the CA, chimney stacks and traditional timber sliding sash windows of panes of six over six or half and half, string courses and panelled doors visible throughout.
5. Chains Drive and the surrounding development is a modern interpretation of the historical buildings of Corbridge. It is sensitively designed and executed with dwellings timber sliding sash windows conforming to a pattern of six over six panes. The row of houses the appeal site is located within appear to have their original windows in situ.

6. The appeal property windows are painted timber, and although there was evidence of some deterioration, my over-all view was that the windows appeared to be in a satisfactory condition from external inspection.
7. I note the appellant's comments that there are a number of properties within the development with uPVC windows, however, the precise addresses or details of such have not been provided. In any case, from my inspection, the original windows appear to be in evidence in the majority across the development. I am of the view that in general, windows within the estate appeared to be well maintained and in an acceptable condition.
8. The uniformity of the existing sash windows within the row adds to the character of the development. Replacement fenestration with uPVC windows would introduce a new material to this row that would not be a traditional material here, and one that is not widely recognised within the estate or the CA as a whole.
9. Design sections of the proposed windows have been submitted, however there is no comparison submitted to the original windows. Their proposed proportions is relevant to compare on a like for like basis. In the submitted manufacturer's details, the proposed aperture appears to be smaller than the original window, with a wider frame. I consider their design, materials and overall appearance would add a new feature to the estate that would detract from the appearance of the dwelling, the development as a whole, and the wider CA. The development would therefore diminish the quality of the property and would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
10. Whilst the harm to the CA would be less than substantial, taking into account paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), there are no identified public benefits which would outweigh such harm I have identified.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would neither enhance or preserve the character or appearance of the CA. It would not accord with Policy GD2 of the Tynedale District Local Plan 2000 or Policy BE1 of the Tynedale Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007 that seeks, amongst other matters, for design to be high quality, appropriate to the character of the site and the use of materials, and to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposal also runs counter to the Framework.

Other Matters

12. Issues pertaining to heat loss from the existing windows and energy efficiency is noted, however there is nothing before me to suggest that the heat loss from the original windows could not be improved by standard joinery repairs. Furthermore, no costs of maintenance have been provided and although the low-level nature of uPVC maintenance is noted, this does not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the CA.
13. In respect of replacement doors, I noticed a small number of front doors have been replaced from the original timber panel doors. The evidence of replacement doors does not however, alter my decision.
14. In respect of the original planning condition applied to the permission, the appellant can challenge this condition through other means outside this appeal process.

15. The use of other materials to an extension within the development has been brought to my attention. However, this was in respect of a new extension and not in relation to the replacement of windows. Therefore the circumstances are not one in the same.
16. The appellant has brought to my attention the timeline from pre-application advice to decision of the planning application. Any dispute with the Council and how the service was conducted is not within my remit to comment upon, and should be referred to the Council in the first place.
17. The reference to title deeds and that there is no mention of the removal of permitted development rights is not within my jurisdiction to comment on.

Conclusion

18. I have taken account of the appellant's supporting comments. However, I find harm would arise to the character and appearance of the CA as a result of the proposal. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR