
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2020

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/20/3245244

15 Vyne Road, Basingstoke RG21 5NU

- 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 Bache against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01705/HSE, dated 18 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is replacement of 17 timber sash windows with Woodfinish Timber alternative PVCu sash windows of a similar design.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement of 17 timber sash windows with Woodfinish Timber alternative PVCu sash windows of a similar design at 15 Vyne Road, Basingstoke RG21 5NU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/01705/HSE, dated 18 June 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan - Produced 25th June 2019, 1:1250 scale@A4, License Number: 100053143; Block Plan - Produced 25th June 2019, 1:500 scale@A4, License Number: 100053143; drawing titled 'Existing and Proposed Frames -Dimensions and Visual Comparisons'; drawing titled 'Proposed Frames Road Facing Elevation'; drawing titled 'Proposed Frames Rear and Side Facing Elevation'; photograph titled 'Existing Front Elevations'; photograph titled 'Existing Rear and Side Elevation' and photograph titled 'Existing Street View'.
 - 3) The replacement windows hereby permitted shall be '*Bygone Symphony*' PVCu double-glazed sash units and shall sit within the original window recesses and shall employ a semi-matt white wood grain foil wrap finish.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the South View Conservation Area (SVCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached, two and a half storey dwelling of traditional design, dating back to around 1900, with brick walls under a tiled, pitched roof. It lies on the west side of Vyne Road, within the SVCA. The property contains a large number of timber sliding sash windows, notably within the gabled elements of the front and north side of the building, including projecting ground and first floor bay windows on the front elevation. Many of these windows are visible from the public realm of Vyne Road and Richmond Road, and as such, are covered by a Direction under Article 4(2) of the *Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015* requiring planning permission for their replacement.
4. Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* (the Act) requires that with respect to development affecting buildings or other land in a conservation area, 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.' In addition, Paragraph 193 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
5. The South View Conservation Area Appraisal (2006) (SVCAA) states that the essence of the conservation area is of terraced, semi-detached and detached properties, predominantly of two stories in height and dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods. 15 Vyne Road is a typical example of such development, and lies within the character area comprising the principal residential zone running from Burgess Road northwards to Darlington Road. The property is designated as a 'notable building', together with a large number of other dwellings within the SVCA, including the adjacent properties at nos. 11 and 13 Vyne Road. As such, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the significance of the SVCA.
6. The proposal would replace 17 single glazed sliding sash timber windows on the front, side and rear elevations, with double glazed, sliding sash PVCu white timber-effect windows from the 'Bygone Symphony' range.
7. The SVCAA confirms that historic joinery, including sash windows, is fundamentally important to the character of the area, especially as its close-knit nature and continuous street frontages contribute considerably to the sense of cohesion.
8. Whilst acknowledging that the existing timber windows on the appeal property are not historic, the Council considers that they are comparable in appearance to those of historic fenestration within the site vicinity, comprising similar detailing and material, and that they positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. I do not disagree with this assessment.
9. I have noted the Council's concerns in respect of the design detailing of the proposed replacement windows. The detailed design information submitted by the Appellant confirms that the proposed windows would comprise similar proportions and fenestration pattern to those of the existing windows, and would operate as plain glazed vertical sliding sashes. Other detailing includes mechanical butt joints, run-through horns on the top sashes and a white semi-

matt wood grain foil effect finish to give the appearance of painted wood and avoid the 'shiny' finish often associated with PVCu.

10. Bespoke frames would fit the existing window apertures. The box frames and the individual frames for each of the sliding sashes would be finished with slim proportions, with profiles, meeting rails and sashes within 5mm of those of the existing windows. Slimline 18mm double glazed units with white spacers would minimise the potential for 'double-reflection'. Although the glazing bars would be fitted externally, they would be to both sides of the double-glazed units, with spacer bars between, resulting in an appropriately solid appearance.
11. Taking the above into account, I find that, whilst not identical to the existing windows, the proposed windows would be of a high quality and well designed, and would closely replicate the character and appearance of the existing windows. The windows would be set back from the road at a distance where the wood grain effect would not appear discernibly different from a painted timber window frame in views from the public realm. As such, I find that the proposed windows would not noticeably alter the established character or appearance of the host property, and would not be unduly conspicuous within the street scene.
12. I acknowledge the Council's concerns about the gradual loss of building features which are characteristic of the conservation area and the potential cumulative erosion of the area's special character. In this respect, I observed a number of double-glazed PVCu windows within the vicinity of the appeal site, on elevations that are clearly visible from the road, and which do not respect the original sash window design characteristic of the period properties within the conservation area. However, I find that these windows are noticeably different to, and are of a lower design quality than those of the appeal proposal, which I have found to be of a high standard of design and finish which is sympathetic to the original windows.
13. Furthermore, the Appellant has drawn my attention to two allowed appeals¹ and two sites² where planning approval was granted for similarly designed 'Bygone Symphony' replacement windows as those in the proposal before me, to properties recognised as being of value within conservation areas within Basingstoke and Deane borough. These decisions reflect the distinction drawn by the Inspectors and the Council between the specification of the windows proposed and 'conventional' PVCu windows. Given the clear parallels in context and proposals, I attach significant weight to these decisions in my assessment of the appeal development.
14. The Council considers that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the existing windows are beyond repair and that replacement is justified. The Council has also drawn my attention to the *Heritage SPD* (2019), which states that, where windows are beyond repair, they should normally be replaced on a like for like basis, and that any deviations in design from that of the existing windows must be justified.
15. With the above in mind, I have had regard to the Appellant's supporting information which provides details of existing window defects, including rotted window sills and sash joints, sagging window rails, and upper frame collapse,

¹ APP/H1705/D/14/2228325 and APP/H1705/D/16/3154750

² 19 Queens Road and 42 Queens Road, Basingstoke

- evidence of which I observed during my site inspection. I have also noted the Appellant's comments in respect of problems of water ingress, condensation, draught and noise associated with the existing windows, the latter of which is acknowledged to be an issue by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.
16. I note the Council's view that such matters could be dealt with by measures such as secondary glazing and repairing the existing windows. I have no details of the former before me, and, as such, I am not persuaded that the installation of secondary glazing would respect the character and appearance of the property. Having regard to repairing the existing windows, I observed during my site visit, that the windows have been painted and maintained. However, I have noted the Appellant's statement regarding the required frequency and costs of such maintenance and whether this can be sustained in the future. Having regard to the existing condition of the windows, the overall number of windows involved, and the high-level position of a number of the windows, I see no reason to doubt that future maintenance works would be time-consuming and costly.
 17. Taking all of the above factors together, and having regard to my findings in respect of the design of the proposed windows, in this instance, I consider that the replacement of the existing timber windows has been adequately justified, and that the appeal proposal would not conflict with the overall aims and objectives of the Heritage SPD.
 18. I have also had regard to the Historic England guidance document, *Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading* (2015) which advocates the conservation and repair of surviving historic fenestration in conservation areas. However, I note that the Council states that in this case the existing windows are not historic.
 19. In making my decision, I have considered four dismissed appeals³ that have been drawn to my attention by the Council in respect of replacement PVCu windows to notable buildings in conservation areas within the Borough Council area. I note that three of these decisions relate to differently designed, more 'conventional' PVCu windows. These are not, therefore, directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me in respect of factors including double glazing thickness, frame dimensions and opening method, and the level of detail provided in respect of the replacement windows.
 20. In the case of the appeal in respect of Bygone Symphony windows, the Inspector raised no objection to the proposed slim-line double glazing, but considered that the PVCu material would look different to timber windows within the context of the close-range views of the property. This property appears to comprise an end of terrace dwelling which abuts the side boundary of the site adjacent to a highway, and as such, its context within the street scene is different to that of the appeal property. The Inspector's decision also noted that the replacement of the windows had not been well-justified, with the Appellant acknowledging that the existing windows appeared to be in good condition. Therefore, I afford these decisions limited weight in my decision, and they do not persuade me to come to an alternative view with regard to the main issue.

³ APP/H1705/C/18/3218254, APP/H1705/D/17/3184218, APP/H1705/D/19/3228143 and APP/H1705/D/17/3172737

21. For the above reasons, I am satisfied that the proposal would not noticeably alter the established character or appearance of the host property. It therefore follows that the proposal would have a neutral effect on this notable building and would preserve the character and appearance of the SVCA as a whole, and would not harm the conservation area's significance as a heritage asset. As such, the proposal would accord with Local Plan Policy EM11 which requires new development to conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and to conserve or enhance the quality, distinctiveness and character of heritage assets by ensuring use of appropriate materials, design and detailing. For similar reasons, the proposal would also accord with Policies of Chapter 16 of the Framework in respect of the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Conditions

22. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. These plans detail the size and design of the proposed frames but do not indicate the semi-matt wood grain white PVCu/foil finish that is stated on the application form and the Appellant's Design and Access and Heritage Statement. Therefore, and having regard to the specific details of the proposal, which are determinant in this case, it is reasonable to impose a condition that specifies the make and model of the proposed windows. This is necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area. As any future replacement of the windows would require further planning permission, it is not necessary to control the retention of the windows hereby permitted.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR