



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2020

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/D/20/3253314

110 High Street, Newton Le Willows, WA12 9SH

- 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 Armando Colletta against the decision of St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2020/0029/HHFP, dated 23 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement of external windows to uPVC windows.
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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 High Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the High Street Conservation Area, which encompasses the historic centre of Newton Le Willows. This was originally a medieval settlement that expanded significantly during the Georgian and Victorian periods. The conservation area is linear in shape and is characterised by a compact form of development lining the thoroughfares of High Street and Park Road North. Its significance stems from the large number of well-preserved buildings and spaces that reflect the historic development of the area over time.
4. The appeal building is a traditional terraced house on the northern side of High Street. It forms part of a short terrace of attractive properties that are 2 stories in height and front directly onto the street. These properties are rendered finished, with pitched slate roofs and chimneystacks, and traditional windows. They reflect the historic pattern of development along High Street and clearly make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Whilst the High Street and Willow Park Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) does not formally identify every building that is considered to positively contribute to the conservation area, I note that a picture of this row is included at page 30 under the heading 'architectural character'.
5. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies traditional timber framed windows as a key feature of the area. It also states that the replacement of timber

windows and doors with other materials, such as aluminium and uPVC, has had a damaging effect on the character of the conservation area. In this regard, the existing timber windows in the appeal building are not original and they differ in style from those in the properties on either side. However, they have a traditional appearance that is broadly sympathetic to the character of the appeal property and the surrounding area. In my view, the replacement of these windows with modern bulky uPVC frames would erode the historic character of the building and would diminish its contribution to this part of the conservation area. It would also jar with the traditional appearance of the window frames on either side. Moreover, given that the frontage of the appeal building is immediately adjacent to the street, the uPVC windows would appear particularly prominent.

6. During my site visit, I noted that some of the historic properties nearby also had uPVC windows. However, it is not clear whether these benefit from planning permission or whether they were installed under permitted development rights. Whilst the appellant states that an audit of the windows along High Street found that 48% have a combination of uPVC window styles at ground and first floor levels, it is unclear whether that includes modern properties and shopfronts. With regard to the neighbouring dwelling at No 104 High Street, that is a modern property with an entirely separate character. In any case, the detrimental presence of uPVC windows in the vicinity does not provide a justification for the further erosion of historic fabric and character.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the High Street Conservation Area. This harm would be 'less than substantial' in the context of Paragraphs 195-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). However, there are no public benefits associated with the proposal that would outweigh this harm.
8. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy CQL 4 of the St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (2012), saved Policy ENV 24B of the St Helens Unitary Development Plan (1997), and guidance in the Framework relating to designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR