



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2020

by Tobias Gethin BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/W/20/3254997

1 Victoria Road, Exmouth EX8 1DL

- 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 Richard Gray against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2092/FUL, dated 18 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as replacement windows (17 No.).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement windows (17 No.) at 1 Victoria Road, Exmouth EX8 1DL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/2092/FUL, dated 18 September 2019, and 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 location plan; east elevation (existing); north elevation (existing); Elevations and plan views of existing timber and existing UPVC windows; Proposed Sash Window (plan view, amended, received by the Council on 20 January 2020); Proposed Window Elevation (dated Jan 2020, received by the Council on 20 January 2020); Vertical section through sash (outside, received by the Council on 6 January 2020); and Horizontal sections (through top sash and bottom sash, outside, received by the Council on 6 January 2020).

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Exmouth Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site contains a corner building fronting on to the open amenity area known as Strand Gardens. Although not listed nor identified as a key building on the Council's Historic Building Character map, it is an attractive and prominent feature in the locality. Existing first- and second-floor windows on the site consist of both timber sash and uPVC designs. There are a variety of upper-floor windows visible in the surrounding area and the CA, including numerous uPVC designs of varying quality. I observed on my site visit that the relatively poor condition of the existing timber sash windows on the site serve

to somewhat detract from the well-designed character and uniform appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area, and its existing uPVC windows do not stand out as incongruous or harmful within their context.

4. The site is located within the Exmouth CA. The evidence before me indicates that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and particularly the area in the vicinity of the site, stems from, in part, the urban open space of The Strand, the good examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century shop fronts and it being a historic part of the town centre.
5. The appeal proposal seeks to replace 17 existing timber framed windows. With these windows being on the first and second floors of the host building, the shopfronts and ground-floor fenestration on the site would not be altered.
6. With a relatively slim profile and vertical sliding sash openings, the design and appearance of the proposed windows would be similar to the existing sash windows that would be replaced. Despite being uPVC rather than timber, the replacement windows would therefore sufficiently reflect the form of the existing windows and respect the character and appearance of the host building. On this basis, and given that the replacement windows would be elevated above street level, it seems to me that the change in material would not be particularly noticeable.
7. With the prevalence of uPVC windows in the surrounding area, the proposed windows would neither read as unsympathetic nor visually intrusive additions within their context. They would also appear as high-quality replacements in relation to the condition of the existing timber frames and the mix of uPVC windows in the locality.
8. Accordingly, and for the above reasons, I am satisfied that the appeal proposal would not harm the special qualities and significance of the CA as a whole. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Exmouth CA and find that it accords with Policies D1 and EN10 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 2031. Amongst other aspects, these require development to be of a high quality design, relate well to their context, not adversely affect the distinctive historic character of the area and preserve or enhance the appearance and character of the conservation area. The proposal would also be consistent with the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to achieving well-designed places and conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Conclusion and Conditions

9. For the above reasons, the appeal is allowed.
10. The Council did not submit any suggested conditions for my consideration as part of the appeal. However, in addition to the standard time limit condition, their Officer Report recommended a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. In the interests of certainty and clarity, I have imposed both of these conditions.

Tobias Gethin

INSPECTOR