
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2020

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/D/20/3253119

2 Millers Cottages, Belvedere Road, Faversham ME13 7LN

- 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 Raymond Lindley against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/505886/FULL, dated 23 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement of ground floor front door and 2no. first floor French doors.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of proposed development provided on the planning application form has been replaced by a more succinct version in subsequent documents. I consider this to be usefully more concise and have thus employed it here.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the replacement doors would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Faversham Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. Millers Cottages has the appearance of a converted warehouse building with the block as a whole having a uniformity to its design. The building formed part of the wider redevelopment of Faversham Creekside and the design approach reflects the industrial heritage of the Creekside. This is a key characteristic of the existing block. To change elements of the building's appearance would undermine its visual uniformity and original design concept. A planning condition imposed upon the original planning permission and Article 4((2) Direction that is in place have no doubt been imposed to ensure the original design ethos is maintained and to prevent the heritage value of the area from being eroded.
5. The ground floor door has already been replaced. The new door does not reflect the appearance of the original timber door or that of the other entrance doors within the building. It is, therefore, out of keeping with the appearance

- of those other entrance doors. Despite the door being within a landscaped recess where there is a door painted the same colour, the replacement door, being visually discordant with the other entrance doors within the block, diminishes the cohesive uniformity of the building's appearance. For this reason, the entrance door is visually harmful to the property itself, the block as a whole and to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. The first-floor French doors, although said to match the colour, design details and chrome hardware of the existing French doors, being aluminium, would be out of keeping with the existing timber features and materials within the building. On the available evidence I am not persuaded that their form would seamlessly assimilate within the building frontage and ensure the original design ethos would be maintained.
 7. I have been directed to examples of other entrance doors in the area none of which relate to the Millers Cottages block. The example at Golding Wharf is of the same appearance to that of the other doors in that block and, therefore, there is continuity to that appearance of that building. I have been directed to three door examples at Provender Walk. These are rather unfortunate changes that have diminished the visual continuity of those developments. I do not consider those examples offer support for entrance door changes to be replicated elsewhere within the Creekside area. Those examples at Belvedere Wharf and Provender Mill relate to buildings of a very different appearance and are appropriate in their own individual contexts.
 8. There are a variety of door styles and designs within the area, however each development has its own distinct character and appearance. I do not consider those door examples drawn to my attention would overcome my above concerns or justify the harm that I have identified to Millers Cottages even if the Town Council and a county councillor have offered their support to the proposal.
 9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates 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. Given the size and scale of the proposal affecting the CA as a whole, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the character of the CA and the proposal would neither preserve or enhance it.
 10. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework I must weigh the harm against the public benefit of the proposal. The development could provide a benefit to the appellant by improving energy efficiency, internal light, security and reduce maintenance. However, these are personal benefits for the appellant rather than benefits to the public. I conclude that the proposed development would fail to accord with national policy that requires special attention to be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA (Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).
 11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies CP4, CP8, DM14, DM16 and DM33 of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD): 'Designing an Extension' and 'Conservation Areas'. These policies and SPDs seek, amongst other matters, development to promote

and reinforce local distinctiveness, conserve and enhance the historic environment and special character or appearance of CAs and not to downgrade the appearance of the building and the CA.

Conclusion

12. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR