



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2020

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F9498/D/20/3256920

Combe House, Jubilee Terrace, Timberscombe, TA24 7TU

- 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 Miss Sarah Campbell against the decision of Exmoor National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 6/34/20/102, dated 6 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement of existing windows and doors throughout the building with UPVC or white aluminium frames and double glazed windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed replacement windows and doors in the front elevation. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the windows and doors in all the other elevations and planning permission is granted for replacement UPVC double glazed windows and doors at Combe House, Jubilee Terrace, Timberscombe, TA24 7TU in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 6/34/20/102, dated 6 April 2019, and the Site Location Plan, Door & Window Schedule dated 26 February 2018, insofar as they relate to all the windows and doors other than those in the front elevation.

Procedural Matters

2. In the appellant's appeal statement, it is asserted the application did not include the Post Office and it was purely a domestic application. However, the submitted plans included the proposed replacement of the Post Office windows and doors and the description on the application form referred to windows and doors throughout the building. The appeal has therefore been considered on this basis.
3. When the planning application was submitted it is understood the whole of the property had timber windows and doors, (single glazed). However, at the time of the appeal site visit the proposed works to the rear of the property had largely been completed with white UPVC double glazed replacements.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.

Reasons

5. As the property is located within the historic settlement core of Timberscombe which is recorded on the National Park Authority's (NPA) Historic Environment Record, it forms part of a non-designated heritage asset having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). The significance of the heritage asset largely derives from the streetscape character of the traditional and historic buildings clustered around the Grade I listed St Petrock's Church.
6. The front of the mid-terrace two storey appeal property is of a traditional design and constructed of local red sandstone with a slate roof. It is mainly in use as a dwelling but part of the ground floor operates as the village Post Office with a traditional style shop front. Although the main rear wall is similarly constructed of local red sandstone, the rear elevation is dominated by what appears to be a mostly later and largely rendered two storey flat roof rear projection.
7. Owing to the dominance of this more modern rear projection and given only the two first floor windows at the far end of the projection are visible in public views, it is considered the works to the rear do not harm the character and appearance of the host property or the wider area and are therefore acceptable.
8. With regard to the front, the property is visually prominent within the settlement's historic core, particularly in views approaching from Church Street to the south-east. With the entire front elevation comprising timber windows and doors, the consistency in materials results in the building having a visually pleasing coherent appearance.
9. As emphasised by the appellant, within the terrace and surrounding buildings there are examples of both timber and UPVC windows and doors. However, it is those of timber construction, as currently found at the appeal property, that harmonise with the traditional character of the buildings and thereby make a positive contribution to the locality.
10. The proposal is to replace the four front dwelling windows with white UPVC. The timber front door would be replaced with a UPVC composite door in a sage green colour and the Post Office windows and doors would be replaced with white aluminium.
11. The UPVC window frames would have a bulkier profile than timber and although they would be a sash design, they would lack the glazing bar details of the existing frames. The UPVC and aluminium frames would also have a more modern shiny and reflective appearance. As a result, they would fail to harmonise with the traditional character of the building. The mix of materials, including the composite door, would also eliminate the existing coherent appearance. Consequently, there would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the property and the positive contribution it makes to the locality.
12. The windows are plainly in need of repair with the lower part of three of the dwelling windows currently boarded over. It is acknowledged the current situation has significant adverse impacts, particularly in terms of; the living conditions of the appellant's family, the security of the dwelling and the Post

Office, safety in terms of falling glass and timber and the visual appearance of the property and its effect on the wider area.

13. The reasons for seeking action are therefore understood and to justify the appellant's choice of UPVC/aluminium, two quotes for works to the dwelling have been provided from a national double glazing supplier; one for replacement timber and one for replacement UPVC. The quote for timber is considerably more expensive.
14. Nevertheless, it has not been demonstrated whether the windows could be viably repaired given it is usually only the lower portions of the frame that are in need of repair. Thermal efficiency could also be improved through options such as draught strips or secondary glazing. Even if repair were not viable, it has not been demonstrated whether alternative suppliers could provide suitable timber replacements at a comparable cost to UPVC/aluminium. Limited weight may therefore be given to the appellant's expressed concerns in respect of cost and the consequent associated potential effect on the Post Office operation.
15. Given the above, it is concluded the proposed changes to the front elevation would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. The identified harm is not outweighed by other considerations. The changes would conflict with Policies GP1, CE-S4, CE-D3 and CE-S6 of the 2017 Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011-2031 (LP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure development conserves the local identity and distinctiveness of Exmoor's built and historic environment. Furthermore, it would conflict with Policy CE-D6 of the LP, (as referred to in the NPA's Committee Report) as the changes to the shop front would not conserve the character and appearance of the host building and the wider streetscape. It would also conflict with the Framework which seeks to ensure heritage assets are conserved.
16. While the Council's decision notice also referred to Policy HC-D16 of the LP, it is not applicable in this case.

Conclusion

17. The proposed works to the front elevation are clearly severable from the remainder of the proposed development as applied for and therefore, while the appeal fails in relation to the proposed works to the front elevation, it succeeds in respect of the works to the rear of the property. It is unnecessary to impose the NPA's suggested condition relating to the commencement of development as the development has already started. A condition identifying the plans is also unnecessary as these are included within the terms of the decision.

C J Ford

PLANNING DECISION OFFICER