



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 6 April 2021

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/20/3255620

**Doka House (formerly Milford Sound), High Street, Bray, Maidenhead
SL6 2AA**

- 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 Fred Doka against the decision of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- The application Ref 20/00574, dated 23 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 June 2020.
- The development proposed is described as 'replacement of the existing white timber windows with white uPVC windows and white timber cladding with artificial light grey cladding (wood grain effect), new black fascia, removal of the existing chimney, changes to fenestration, demolition of the conservatory and bay-window (retrospective).'

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The address on the planning application form and the Council's decision notice refer to the site as 'Milford Sound', however the appellant confirms that the name was subsequently altered to 'Doka House' as entered on the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the Bray Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The Bray Conservation Area Appraisal 2009 notes that buildings within the CA vary in style and proportion, but that there is a local vernacular evident with repeated use of traditional materials and building constructions. Together with the historic form and layout of the village and the retained original architectural details to many of the buildings, I find that this is an important aspect of the distinctive character and appearance of the CA, and adds to its significance.
5. The appeal site comprises a substantial plot at the entrance to the Bray CA and includes a detached bungalow which the Council suggests was built in circa 1880. The appeal development has already been carried out, and includes the removal of features of the dwelling including a brick chimney, veranda with balustrading and a bay window. External timber cladding and decorative bargeboards have also been replaced by woodgrain-effect cladding and black fascias, and timber door and windows have been altered and uPVC replacements of differing style and form installed. From the evidence before me, this development has resulted in a substantial loss of historic fabric overall and the loss of retained original

features which added to the dwelling's architectural and historic interest, and to the character and appearance of the CA.

6. Moreover, the fibre cement cladding that has been installed has almost a shiny quality, and despite the woodgrain-effect has a clearly artificial appearance distinct from timber. The light grey colour is also unusual. This cladding, as well as the uPVC windows, door and fascias bear little resemblance to the traditional materials which are typical within the CA and I find them wholly unsympathetic to the architectural character and provenance of the building. The patio doors facing Bray Green further result in uncharacteristically large expanses of glazing which relate poorly to the building's original proportions, and the top and side hung casement style replacement windows do not reflect the sliding sash or side hung casement windows which are characteristic to this part of the CA.
7. For these reasons, I find that the development has significantly eroded the distinctive style and form of the appeal dwelling. It is in a prominent position on the approach to the village core of the CA, and stands out incongruously in views including from Bray Road and across Bray Green. As a consequence, there is harm to the character and the appearance of the CA and thus its significance, and the proposal conflicts with saved Policy CA2 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Amendments Adopted June 2003). Amongst other things, this policy requires that development enhances or preserves the character or appearance of conservation areas and seeks the use of traditional materials.
8. Given the nature of the proposal and the relatively localised visual impact, I find that the harm to the significance of the CA is less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Framework therefore indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
9. I acknowledge the poor condition of the dwelling prior to the development, and that the appellant carried out the works in order to provide acceptable living conditions. However, while bringing a property which had been vacant for some time back into residential use is a benefit, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that this could not have been achieved while using sympathetic materials and retaining elements of historic fabric which contributed positively to the character and appearance of the building and wider CA.
10. I do not therefore find that these factors amount to a public benefit sufficient to outweigh the harm that the development causes to heritage assets, a matter that I give considerable importance and weight in accordance with the Framework. In addition, the proposal fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA as required by s72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR