
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2021

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/21/3269960

Flat 5, 23 Surrey Road, Margate CT9 2JR

- 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 Beynon against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref FH/TH/20/1263, dated 23 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement of French doors to first floor front balcony.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the replacement UPVC French doors would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host property and the Norfolk Road, Warwick Road and Surrey Road Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The windows, doors and balcony at the frontage of this property are timber with the exception of a window at ground floor. The property with its first-floor balcony feature is typical of many of those properties within Surrey Road. The traditional materials and their finishes correspond to and complement the age and design of the property and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the CA. The area is of heritage and architectural interest, and this gives the CA significance.
4. The proposal would replace the existing first floor timber doors with UPVC French doors. Based upon the details submitted with the application the UPVC frames appear substantially bulkier than the timber of the existing doors.
5. Many of the nearby properties, including 21 and 26 Surrey Road, host UPVC windows and doors. It is very likely that many of those windows and doors were installed prior to the CA's designation in 2016. That said, slim timber framed windows and doors are still prevalent within the properties along Surrey Road. The UPVC used in the wider area has diminished the traditional architecture of these buildings. Therefore, I give significant weight to preserving traditional materials within this CA. The presence of inappropriate materials does not provide a justification for further inappropriate materials to be installed.

6. The proposed doors would replicate the design and proportions of the existing doors. Nonetheless, the UPVC doors by design would have thicker frames and section sizes and would be of visually different texture and appearance to that of existing timber doors, even if finished in foil wood effect. As a consequence the replacement UPVC doors would be out of keeping with, and visually detrimental to, the host property that retains more of its single glazed timber windows and doors than not. Therefore, the UPVC doors would detract from the traditional architecture of the building and create a frontage of disjointed appearance. The proposal would further dilute the more appropriate timber doors within the CA and diminish the special character of the CA. Although the doors are at first floor level, their thicker frames would be noticeably bulkier than the timber doors they would replace. The visual harm arising from the replacement doors would be clearly visible in public views from Surrey Road.
7. Consequently, I find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider CA. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the replacement UPVC French doors would neither preserve or enhance the CA.
8. 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. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification. The Framework is clear that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
9. Given the size and scale of the proposal within the CA as a whole, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework, I must weigh the harm against the public benefit of the proposal. Although UPVC doors would reduce the appellant's personal expense of replacement timber doors and their maintenance, the benefit to the public, in my view, would be minimal, and insufficient to outweigh the harm identified. I conclude therefore that the replacement UPVC French doors would fail to accord with national policy.
10. I conclude that the proposed replacement UPVC French doors would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host property or the CA. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies HE02 and QD02 of the Thanet District Council Local Plan March 2020 and the Framework that seek, amongst other matters, development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and to reinforce the local character of the area. Furthermore, 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).

Conclusion

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

Nicola Davies INSPECTOR