



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2021

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/W/21/3273369

Flat D Avenay Court, 217 Sandgate Road, Folkestone CT20 2LN

- 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 Ian Hopkins against the decision of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/1431/FH, dated 21 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is to replace rotten wooden Sash Windows and metal framed windows to 3 sides of the property. It will include full Sash Box removal and strengthening works to the large bays front and rear of the property. There are 12 windows in total.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The address of the flat has been given as Flat B on the planning application form. The officer's report indicates that it has been established the proposal relates to Flat D rather than Flat B. The Council has amended the address accordingly. Correspondingly, I have utilised the corrected address in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised in respect of the appeal is the effect of the replacement front and rear first floor timber bay windows with uPVC windows upon the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The proposal relates to a 20th Century property that retains much of its original features and detailing. Whilst not itself located within the Folkestone, Leas and Bayle Conservation Area (the CA) it lies to its west. Nevertheless, there is a continuity to many of the buildings on Sandgate Road, whether they fall within or outside the CA.
5. The existing front and rear bay windows are timber sashes, painted white, and host horns as typically found in historic timber sash windows. Although some windows in the side elevations have been replaced by uPVC and others are a mix of Crittal and timber windows, the front and rear elevations retain their timber sashes. The existing windows in the front and rear elevations, therefore, maintain a unity to them which both respects the architecture of the

- building and the historic context relating to the building's era of construction. The traditional materials and their finishes correspond to and complement the property and contribute positively to its character and appearance.
6. The proposed replacement windows would replicate the design and proportions of the existing windows, although without the horn detailing. Whilst the appellant indicates that horns would be bolted on to the frames, I must consider what is shown on the proposal drawings that are before me, and those details do not include horns. Based upon the details submitted with the application, the uPVC frames appear substantially bulkier than the timber of the existing front and rear sash windows and unlike the existing sash windows would uncharacteristically incorporate window cills.
 7. The uPVC windows by design would have thicker frames and section sizes. Although their shiny appearance may be similar to the sheen of white gloss paint, the windows would be of visually different texture and appearance to that of the existing timber windows. As a consequence, the replacement uPVC windows would be out of keeping with, and visually detrimental to, the host property. Therefore, the uPVC windows would detract from the traditional architecture of the building. The proposal would also create front and rear elevations of disjointed appearance resulting from the mixed use of timber and uPVC windows. The visual harm arising from the replacement windows would be clearly visible in public views from Sandgate Road and Balfour Gardens at the rear of the site.
 8. The windows within the adjoining property, Heighton Court, have been replaced by uPVC windows. It is contended that the replacement uPVC windows are hard to distinguish from original windows. However, I saw that those windows are bulkier than the timber sash windows at the appeal property. Their thick frames have detracted from the architectural style of that 20th Century property. I do not agree with the appellant on this point.
 9. I have also been directed to Sandgate Court, a large block of flats. However, that is a property of more recent construction and its modern design is of very different architectural character and appearance to that of the appeal property. The windows in that development are of casement style with horizontal emphases. I, therefore, do not consider the windows utilised within that development are comparable to those sashes within this 20th Century property or would justify the replacement of the existing windows with uPVC windows.
 10. There are other examples opposite where uPVC windows have been installed or where there is a mix of uPVC and timber windows within properties. That said, timber framed windows are still prevalent within other properties along the street. The uPVC used in the wider area has diminished the traditional architecture of these buildings. The presence of inappropriate uPVC windows, including those already installed within the side elevation of the appeal property, do not provided a justification for inappropriate and unsympathetic windows to be installed at the appeal property.
 11. I, therefore, do not consider that those other examples brought to my attention offer any support in favour of this proposal that is before me and may have taken place prior to the development plan that is in place having been adopted.

12. I note Folkestone Town Council has not raised an objection to the proposal. Nevertheless, the proposal needs to be considered in terms of the wider public interest.
13. For these reasons, I conclude that the replacement front and rear first floor timber bay windows with uPVC windows would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policy HB1 of the Folkestone & Hythe District Places and Policies Local Plan September 2020 that seeks, amongst other matters, development to make a positive contribution to its location and surroundings, enhance integration while also respecting existing buildings and land uses, particularly with regard to materiality (amongst others) so as to ensure all proposals create places of character.

Conclusion

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

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR