



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2021

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3275132

51 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, SE10 8UG

- 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 Ms Webster against the decision of the Council of The Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application 21/0467/HD, dated 5 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is the replacement of 7 windows on middle/top floors of front elevation with uPVC double glazed windows which match the existing design.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Ashburnham Triangle Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Ashburnham Triangle Conservation Area. Under s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I have a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Area.
 4. The Conservation Area covers an area contained by three main roads, with quiet predominately residential areas within that area. Streets were developed in the Georgian and Victorian eras and there are attractive groupings of houses on those streets. Ashburnham Place contains much of the original character and quality of urban form, with a good degree of preservation in original appearance and materials.
 5. I saw at my site visit that elevations to properties on either side of the road are, in the main, of very good condition with a high degree of retention of fenestration. The significance of the Conservation Area as a heritage asset derives from the attractive grouping of residential properties and the high degree of preservation in original features to these groups.
 6. The appeal property lies within a distinctive and very attractive terrace of three storey houses on the northern side of Ashburnham Place. The proposed development would see the replacement of 7 existing sash windows at the
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property with uPVC windows. I accept these are of a high quality - not 'off the shelf' design or manufacturer - and that consequently they incorporate design details that seek to ensure close replication of the existing windows. I note the appellant's reference to various other appeals and cases where windows of similar specification have been found to be acceptable replacements for original timber windows.

7. However, in my view the particular issue in this appeal is the very close position of the windows in the appeal property and the location of that property within a terrace where windows are predominately original. I paid close attention to the houses of Ashburnham Place at my site visit where I saw there are only a very small number of properties in the terrace that have replacement windows. Where there are modern windows and double glazed windows these are plainly discernable from the street due to the evident difference from the strong character that exists in the terrace arising from the overwhelming consistency in windows; this includes the existing double glazed windows at No. 51. The very close positioning of the terrace to the street makes these differences clear.
8. I acknowledge that the proposed windows have been designed with details to closely match original windows in the terrace, and that the construction would be a wood grain effect. Whilst these would make the windows less obvious as uPVC than 'off the shelf' products and better than other examples in the terrace, I cannot agree such measures would make them indistinguishable from original timber windows in the terrace. Most notably, the 28mm thickness of the double-glazed units would make the two panes of glass readily apparent as modern windows and emphasize other modern aspects of the windows in form and use of materials. Crucially in this appeal, the very short distance of the windows from the street means that those differences would be evident to the public and their enjoyment of the conservation area.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to other cases where similar uPVC windows have been allowed, including at appeal, and details have been provided for some of these examples. Whilst the design of the windows may be suited to a different property or a different location, in the case before me I consider the design would not be suited: it is the important point in this appeal that the terrace is well-preserved as a consistent group with predominantly original windows and there is very clear visibility of those windows. I must, of course, determine this appeal on its own merits. I also note the permission granted for double glazed windows at 60 Ashburnham Place, but it is the thickness of the units and the modern materials that are the chief failings of the current scheme.
10. The proposed development would therefore conflict with Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), Policies DH1, DH3, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy (2014), the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance SPD (December 2018) and Ashburnham Triangle Conservation Area: Character Appraisal (December 2008), whose aims include ensuring development is of a high standard of design and conserves or enhances heritage assets and their character, appearance and setting.
11. Thus, there would be harm to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset and I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm. That harm would be less than substantial and so, in accordance with

paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework, must be considered against the public benefit of the proposal.

12. The appellant informs me the existing windows are in a poor condition, and also that she wishes to improve the energy efficiency of the property. I accept that improvements to energy efficiency would be a public benefit. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework I must balance this against the identified harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
13. In this instance it is my judgement that the degree of harm that arises due to the design and materials for the proposed windows would be of a scale that clearly outweighs any benefit: there would be appreciable, long-term harm to the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and there is a considerable wider public interest in preserving these matters.
14. I therefore conclude that there are no public benefits arising from the proposed works that would outweigh the harm identified. My conclusions thus remain the same on the main issue and so the appeal is dismissed.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR