



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 FEBRUARY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/W/21/3277278

The Flat, 31-33 Sandgate High Street, Sandgate CT20 3AH

- 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 Sonny Spencer against the decision of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0084/FH, dated 17 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2021.
 - The development is for proposed uPVC sliding sash windows in ash white, cedar lap cladding in ash white, composite front door in ash white, installation of solar PV on rear roof & the installation of heat pumps.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for proposed uPVC sliding sash windows in ash white, cedar lap cladding in ash white, composite front door in ash white, installation of solar PV on rear roof & the installation of heat pumps at The Flat, 31-33 Sandgate High Street, Sandgate CT20 3AH in accordance with the terms of the application, ref: 21/0084/FH, dated 17 January 2021, and the plans submitted with it (site location plan, DS/2022/a, before and after photographs).

Preliminary Matter

2. At my site visit, I saw that the development has been completed and I note that the application has been submitted retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building, the Sandgate High Street Conservation Area (CA) and the setting of the Listed Building at 26-30A High Street (LB).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within the CA and relates to a two-storey property on the junction between Sandgate High Street and Granville Road East. I have applied the statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA and the nearby Listed Building by attaching considerable importance and weight to that desirability.

5. According to the Sandgate Conservation Area Appraisal, the special architectural and historic interest of the CA derives from its linear layout and coastal location, offering a succession of interesting views along its length as well as intimate lateral ones looking out towards the sea or into the hills to the north, and the large number of historic buildings. A large section of the CA is taken up by Sandgate High Street; a long, busy thoroughfare lined with shops. The CA also includes lanes and roads leading off the High Street, including Granville Road East which according to the Appraisal contains confined, often picturesque views in both directions.
6. To the front, the appeal proposal comprises uPVC sliding sash windows and cedar lap cladding, which would be clearly visible from public viewpoints. I note the Council's concerns in this regard, and fully support the Authority's aims in seeking to preserve the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Areas. I further acknowledge that in most cases the use of modern materials can be harmful to the overall appearance of an individual building and hence the wider Conservation Area.
7. Notwithstanding these comments, although many buildings may have retained their original features, I saw at my site visit that a significant number of properties within the vicinity of the appeal site have also been fitted with replacement uPVC windows and/or cedar lap cladding. With this in mind, and given their unfussy appearance, I consider that the materials would preserve the character of the CA and would not adversely affect the setting of the LB. Consequently no harm would result to their significance as heritage assets.
8. At the rear two air source heat pumps have been installed at first floor level. They are not overly large or imposing and the colour of the units blends with the cladding on the main building; to my mind they are indicative of the typical street clutter present along Granville Road East. They would neither cause undue detriment to the character of the CA, nor adversely affect the setting of the LB. Consequently no harm would result to their significance as heritage assets.
9. I conclude that the proposal would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the building, the CA and the setting of the LB. It would comply with the requirements of Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) and Policies HB1, HB8 and HE1 of the Folkestone & Hythe Places and Policies Local Plan (September 2020). Together these seek to ensure proposals relate to surrounding development, meet high standards of design, and protect the character of conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings. The appeal scheme would also be consistent with the Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainability and requires new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Conditions

10. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the Framework. The development is complete and therefore the standard time limit and plans condition are no longer necessary. I am satisfied that no conditions are required.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR