



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2022

by C. Megginson BA(hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A4520/D/22/3292038

10 Southgarth West , Westoe Village, South Shields NE33 3EG

- 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 Marshall against the decision of South Tyneside Council.
 - The application Ref ST/0807/21/HFUL, dated 13 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is replace existing timber windows with white UPVC sliding sash windows to front and side elevation. Renew existing timber bay window surrounds to match existing (in white painted timber).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Westoe Conservation Area (CA).

Procedural Matter

3. The Council have not objected to the renewal of the timber bay window surrounds on the basis they do not require express planning permission. Whilst they form part of the scheme before me, I have no reason to disagree with the Council's assessment. As such I have focussed my decision, as did the Council, on the replacement windows.

Reasons

4. The CA Appraisal (2006) notes, in summary, that the basis for much of the CA's character and appearance is 'accurate observation of specific architectural styles and comprehensive use of high-quality natural materials.' It details that Southgarth West style concentrates on 'simplicity, honesty and attention to detail' and goes on to recognise the importance of windows within the CA and their specific detailing, which contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the CA. Key issues identified in the appraisal include the 'use of matching materials and accurate designs' and the 'protection of architectural details, large and small.'
5. The appeal property forms part of the Southgarth collection such as is recognised in the appraisal as one of the most interesting groups of buildings in Westoe Village. The appraisal recognises the 'handsome shaped gables' of the appeal property which is a complete replica of a building demolished in 1985. The appeal property sits in a prominent location at the western entrance to the village, with the gable elevation fronting directly onto Sunderland Road. The

strong townscape edge is regarded as one of the best characteristics of the whole CA. The prominence of both the attractive gable and the front of the appeal property, with their decorative first floor bay windows, contribute positively to the significance of the CA.

6. A building's fenestration is an important component in defining its visual and architectural character. The Council have noted that the existing windows at the appeal property are timber, faux-sash windows that are bulky in appearance. The appellant states that the existing windows are the same design as those on No.9 Southgarth and that the replacements would retain this design, with no details any bigger than existing and some details smaller, such as the glazing bars. Whilst this may be the case, even with the proposed use of more slim-line UPVC, I consider the proposed frames would not reflect the need for use of high-quality natural materials or accurately incorporate or protect specific architectural details such as horns, mouldings and beading which have been identified as important to the CA.
7. The appellant states, in summary, that from similar projects it is impossible to distinguish whether the windows are timber or UPVC without extremely close inspection and that the fact that they do not weather like timber should be regarded as a positive. However, I am not convinced based on the evidence provided that this finish would be similar to that created by painted timber. It would introduce a material finish to the appeal building that is not prevalent in other buildings found elsewhere within the CA. UPVC is a material that has an artificial texture and a more sheer and uniform finish, when new and when aging, than painted timber windows. While the matching colour of the proposed UPVC windows would provide some harmony with other windows in the street, it would still be possible in my view to discern them as modern insertions that would be an incongruous intrusion into the historic street scene.
8. UPVC windows have been installed in other properties in the street, but these tended to be isolated examples that failed to harmonise with the overall character and appearance of fenestration in the CA. In any event, the presence of UPVC elsewhere in the street is not a strong point in favour of the appeal scheme. As a result of the harm the replacement windows would cause to the dwelling and the CA, the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance its character or appearance.
9. The harm would be localised and therefore the impact on the CA as a whole would be less than substantial within the meaning of Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In weighing it against the public benefits of the proposal, the appellant has suggested that the scheme would enhance energy efficiency, reduce road noise and pollution levels and eliminate water ingress. However, I have not been presented with substantive evidence to suggest that UPVC windows significantly outperform well installed and maintained timber windows in this regard, which could also be double glazed. Putting aside the above being mainly private benefits, when taken together, they would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have found, and to which I am required to attach great weight.
10. As such, the proposals would conflict with Policy DM6 of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework, Development Management Policies (2011), which, in summary, seeks to protect, preserve and where possible enhance, the character and appearance of heritage assets.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole and all other relevant matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C. Megginson

INSPECTOR