
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19th May 2022

by Megan Thomas Q.C. Barrister-at-Law

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 June 2022

Appeal A Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3286154
3B Coleraine Road, Blackheath SE3 7PF

- 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. Louise Drought against the decision of the Royal Borough Council of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/1122/F, dated 26 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is "existing windows replacement at the front side of the property".
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Appeal B Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3286160
3B Coleraine Road, Blackheath SE3 7PF

- 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. Louise Drought against the decision of the Royal Borough Council of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/3146/F, dated 25 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is "existing windows replacement at the front side of the property".
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Decisions

Appeal A Ref: APP/ E5330/W/21/3286154

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3286160

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for existing windows replacement at the front side of the property at 3B Coleraine Road, Blackheath SE3 7PF in accordance with the terms of the application Ref.21/3146/F, dated 25 August 2021, subject to the following conditions.
 - (1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved plans numbered 00563/PP/01 dated 25 August 2021(Location and Site Plan), 00563/PP/02 dated 25 August
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2021 (existing and proposed elevations) & 0563/PP/03 dated 25 August 2021 (proposed windows and details).

Procedural Matter

3. As set out above there are two appeals on this site. They relate to the same bay window but appeal A seeks replacement with white woodgrain PVCu casement windows and appeal B seeks replacement with softwood timber casement windows in arctic white finish. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits. However, to avoid duplication I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated.

Main Issue – Both Appeals

4. The appeal site is located within the Westcombe Park Conservation Area. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host villa, wider terrace of villas and the Conservation Area.

Reasons – Both Appeals

5. Appeals A and B relate to the same appeal site. No.3 Coleraine Road is part of a terrace of about 15 similar villas which are situated on a gentle slope on the eastern side of Coleraine Road close to its junction with Humber Road. Flat 3B is part of the end-of-terrace property (no.3) which has been divided into flats. The villa at no.3 has a bay window to the front of the lower and upper ground floor levels along with one at first floor level. The property has front and rear dormer windows.
6. The proposed development in Appeal A is the replacement of the existing white timber casement windows of the upper ground floor bay window with PVCu white woodgrain casement windows. The bay window is within flat 3B. The proposed development in Appeal B is the replacement of the same bay window with softwood timber casement windows in arctic white finish.
7. The appeal site is in the Westcombe Park Conservation Area 'CA' and I have borne in mind the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The Council has published an Appraisal of the CA. The significance of Coleraine Road is derived from the presence of good quality groups of late-Victorian paired, detached and terraced villas which are fairly uniform in appearance and tend to possess a richness and complexity of architectural features and detailing. There are also some inter-war houses and a number of poor quality post-war blocks of flats, backland developments and individual properties.
8. The bay window which is the subject of the appeals is made of timber and is reasonably prominent in the streetscene. The repetition of the bay shape and appearance along the terrace is attractive and distinctive and although there are some PVCu windows in the front of the long terrace of villas, these are limited in number.

9. The appeal site bay window comprises 4 main window lights facing front, and one on each end/flank of the bay. Each window has a smaller light above it which consists of a grid of small squares created by lead lines. The glass in those grids is textured and the glass in the main windows is clear. The frames in which the glass sits have raised casings and are rather uneven.
10. The replacement bay window in appeal A would be made of PVCu and glass and have a white woodgrain appearance. There would be a grid pattern in the upper lights. However, the appearance and constructional techniques of the proposed windows would be noticeably different to traditional timber windows.
11. The reflectiveness of PVCu units against the more matt and thin, uneven finish and appearance of a traditionally glazed window would be clearly discernible. Typically, PVCu windows maintain a perfect uniformed and manufactured finish with a 'woodgrain effect' that lacks the finesse and craftsmanship of a traditionally constructed timber window which ages over time. As such, it would be readily apparent that the proposed windows would be modern PVCu replacements. This is illustrated by the PVCu windows in the upper/first floor of the bay window in the adjoining terrace building to the south (no.5 Coleraine Road).
12. I consider that the impact on the host property and on the wider terrace of villas would be unacceptable. The historic materials and distinctive repetitious layout of the bay windows reinforces local identity and contributes to the character and appearance of the CA and consequently the use of non-traditional material would be a discordant addition to the area which would detract from and fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
13. The CA is the designated heritage asset. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that great weight should be given to the heritage asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to their significance. The harm to the heritage asset in this case would be 'less than substantial,' within the meaning of the term in paragraph 202 of the Framework. Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 202 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. Whilst the harm in this case would be 'less than substantial' within paragraph 202, it would be near the more serious end of the spectrum of such harm given the modern materials. There would be benefits flowing from replacing the existing bay window with the PVCu windows. There would be better thermal insulation, fewer draughts, probably less use of the heating system and improved acoustic performance. There would be improved living conditions for existing and future occupants. However, those benefits taken individually or cumulatively do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the host property, the wider terrace of villas and the CA.
15. Consequently, I conclude that in respect of Appeal A, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of no.3 Coleraine Road, the wider terrace of properties in which it sits and would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. It would be contrary to policies HC1 and

D3 of the London Plan (2021), policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) and the Westcombe Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2010 and Westcombe Park Conservation Area Management Strategy 2010.

16. Turning to appeal B, the proposed replacement bay window would be made of softwood timber and would be the same overall size and in the same position. The upper lights would have a grid pattern similar to the existing ones. The appearance of the bay window would lack the identical raised casings of the current bay window and the textured glass of the upper lights would not be replicated. However, the use of timber would be a traditional material which in this case is a key component of the significance of the CA and the bay window would appear more bespoke and uneven than a PVCu replacement. It would also age to the benefit of the appearance of the CA. There would be some harm to the CA, host villa and terrace from a subtle change to the appearance of the bay window but this would be 'less than substantial' in terms of paragraph 202 of the Framework and would be at the very low end of that spectrum of 'less than substantial harm'.
17. Whilst giving the harm considerable importance, I consider that the proposal would have the same benefits that flowed from the proposal in Appeal A. However, as the harm from the appeal B proposal would be very low on the spectrum, in this case those benefits clearly outweigh that harm.
18. On appeal B therefore I conclude that the proposed development would result in some minor harm to the host property, the wider terrace and the CA but I find that that this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits flowing from the development. Overall, the benefits of allowing the appeal B proposal outweigh the disbenefits and I conclude that planning permission should be granted for the appeal B proposal.

Conditions – Appeal B

19. I have considered the imposition of conditions in the light of advice in National Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the statutory time limit condition, a condition which ties the development to the submitted plans is necessary in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion – Both Appeals

20. Having taken all representations into account, I dismiss appeal A and I allow appeal B subject to conditions.

Megan Thomas

INSPECTOR