



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2023

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/22/3306322

21 Lauds Road, Crick, Northamptonshire NN6 7TJ

- 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 Bill Rhodes against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WND/2022/0322, dated 5 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Crick Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. No.21 Lauds Road (No.21) is a two-storey semi-detached cottage located on the west side of Lauds Road close to its junction with The Marsh. It is within the Crick Conservation Area (CA) and located between two grade II listed buildings at No.19 (Woolcombe Adam's Farmhouse) and No.23 Lauds Road. There is a statutory duty under S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.
4. The existing windows of No.21 are multi-paned with dark brown painted softwood frames and secondary glazing. I observed the condition of the windows to be poor in places with significant areas of condensation. It is proposed to replace these with 70mm thick uPVC framed clear paned side opening and top hung storm casement windows, finished in Chartwell Green. The existing painted timber doors (front and back) would be replaced by composite doors in a Leaf Green colour.
5. The recently adopted Crick Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2020) (CCAAMP) explains that the significance of the CA is derived, in part, from its traditional architecture and the survival and maintenance of historic features of value including its street pattern and vernacular buildings. It further identifies that threats to these traditional features and historic fabric include

the replacement of traditional fenestration and doors with modern uPVC counterparts. Section 8.5 of the CCAAMP identifies that simple casement style windows are the most common traditional windows in the CA and generally are of a timber, small multi-pane construction. It also advises that if replacement windows are necessary, they should generally be either timber or metal double casement, and that uPVC is generally not an appropriate material for use in an historic property.

6. I recognise that No.21 does not have its original fenestration details, but the early C20th photograph of the cottage provided by the appellant shows that the historic windows were of multi-pane construction, typical of traditional windows in the CA. Although windows have been replaced, the listed buildings either side of No.21 and properties on the opposite side of Lauds Road have, for the most part, also retained smaller glazing panels or at least some form of mullion or transom detail. The very simple design of the proposed replacement windows with comparably large areas of glazing would appear unduly contemporary and at odds with the prevailing historic character of this part of Lauds Road.
7. Further, uPVC is a synthetic material, with a consistent appearance that does not satisfactorily capture the visual subtleties or depth of painted timber and is clearly distinguishable from it. No.21 has a long frontage, prominent in important views south to north on Lauds Road, seen in the context of the adjoining or adjacent listed buildings. I agree with the Council that it is a building which is sensitive to change. Because of the location of No.21, sited right on the pavement, the proposed uPVC windows and composite door to the front elevation would be readily apparent and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA. I have been provided with very limited information in respect of the suggested alternative 'Residence 7' window, but understand that these have a very flush and flat appearance, in stark contrast to timber.
8. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Having regard to the size of the CA, the localised harm that would be caused by the proposal I find would be less than substantial. The guidance at paragraph 202 of the Framework is that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
9. The appellant has referred to uPVC windows optimising energy conservation because they have better insulation than timber and require no ongoing maintenance. There is, however, nothing before me to suggest that improved insulation could be not achieved with a replacement timber casement window. I therefore find this, and the lack of ongoing maintenance, to be at best a modest public benefit of the proposal and it would not outweigh the less than substantial harm I have found to the CA.
10. I therefore find that the proposed replacement windows and doors would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. In addition to failing to meet the statutory duty at S72(1) of the Act, the proposal would conflict with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local

Plan (Part 1) (2014) and Policy ENV7 of the Daventry District Council Settlement and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) (2020) (LP2) which seek to conserve and enhance designated heritage assets. It would further conflict with LP2 Policy ENV10 and Policy CRICK11 of the made Crick Village Neighbourhood Plan (2021) which together require high quality design that promotes local distinctiveness and local building traditions and materials.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR