



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/Y/22/3300915

Granby House, Granby Hill, BRISTOL, BS8 4LT

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Zsolt Husz of Rutland House (Bristol) Ltd against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00329/LA, dated 23 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 March 2022.
 - The works proposed are replacement of all sash windows of Granby House that were manufactured and installed during 1972-74 on the front (north), side (west) and back (south) elevation with matching style wooden double glazed units and repair window casing and mouldings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and listed building consent is granted for replacement of all sash windows of Granby House that were manufactured and installed during 1972-74 on the front (north), side (west) and back (south) elevation with matching style wooden double glazed units and repair window casing and mouldings, at Granby House, Granby Hill, Bristol, BS8 4LT, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00329/LA, dated 23 January 2022, and the plans submitted with it, substituting the drawing titled 'proposed sash window design + sections' with drawing No. D22169/1 Rev 1, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) In addition to the joinery details submitted (Drawing No. D22169/1 Rev 1), prior to the fitting of any of the windows hereby approved, further joinery details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to show the sealed unit spacer profile, colour, and its position relative to the timber bead, and to clarify that the replacement windows will not incorporate sash horns. Such details shall be submitted in the form of elevation drawings (at a scale of at least 1:20) and section details (at a scale of at least 1:5). The replacement windows shall be constructed in accordance with the agreed details.
 - 3) All new external and internal works and finishes, and any works of making good, shall match the existing original fabric in respect of using materials of a matching form, composition and consistency, detailed execution and finished appearance, except where indicated otherwise on the drawings hereby approved.

Preliminary Matters

2. At appeal the appellant submitted an amended joinery detail to propose functional glazing bars and compare the existing window details with the proposed. This is drawing no. D22169/1 Rev 1, which replaces the drawing titled 'proposed sash window design + sections'. Although this amends the scheme, the change is minor. I do not consider the interests of any party to be prejudiced if I take the revised plan into account. I shall therefore determine the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal upon the significant of the grade II listed building known as Granby House and the character and appearance of the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Additionally, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
5. There is very little before me to inform my understanding of the building's special interest beyond the list description. This suggests that the building dates from circa 1760. The early 20th century sketch and pre 1972 plans of the building show that the work that was carried out in the 1970s was extensive and significantly altered the form and appearance of the building.
6. The building's roof form was entirely altered which has resulted in a bulky gable elevation to both sides. The rear was extended and regularised and the building's front elevation radically altered by replacing decorative 19th century details with the plainer façade that the building has today. Whilst this may suit the building's 1760 date it would appear to be the case that its front façade is largely a 1970s construct, aside from the retention of the door surround, railings and possibly the quoins. One of the plans implies that the front bay window, probably the northeast bay, was reconstructed in timber studwork. As a result, the special interest of the building would appear to be limited to its broad overall composition of two bays to either side of the entrance, the footprint of its historic front range, the door surround and retained railings.
7. The building stands within the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area (the CA). The Council's appraisal¹ explains that the area is influenced by its steeply sloping topography with cascading terraces at the southern edge of the CA and close to the appeal building that provide a characteristic image of Bristol and include many listed buildings. The appeal building occupies a prominent position within the CA and is a positive contributor to the area's character and appearance because of its overall historic form.
8. The existing windows at the front look appropriate for a building of circa 1760. However, it is suggested that the windows were all replaced in the 1970s.

¹ Conservation Area 5 Clifton & Hotwells Character Appraisal & Management Proposals June 2010

Whilst the submitted photo survey is basic, it does show that the existing windows are similarly detailed. On this basis, and because of the extent of alteration that was carried out at this time, I am satisfied that I can reasonably conclude that the existing windows all date from the 1970s.

9. As a result, the proposal would not incur the loss of historic fabric and there can be no certainty that the existing window design replicates a pre-existing historic pattern that should be retained. In such a situation the guidance documents referred to by the Council would steer a decision maker towards accepting the use of double glazing on the basis that the overall impact on the building's significance would be at least neutral.
10. The windows to the rear and side are plain 1 over 1 sashes. They sit within elevations of the building that were wholly altered in the 1970s. The rear of the building has an architectural composition that is typical of that date. These windows do not contribute to the building's special interest. Thus, their replacement with the windows proposed would not harm the significance of the building.
11. The replacement windows at the front would be inserted into the building's principal façade, which does contribute to the building's special interest. The existing glass appears to be modern. However, there is some variation to the overall reflection derived from the use of individual pieces of glass set within a grid of functional glazing bars. This is a detail that adds visual interest to the front of the building. I am satisfied that this would be adequately replicated by the use of individual double glazed units that would be set within narrow functional glazing bars, as detailed on the submitted drawing. The bland appearance derived from large double glazed units with surface applied glazing bars would thus be avoided.
12. Upon close inspection the inside edge of the spacer that holds the two sheets of glass apart would be visible. This would constitute a visual change. In cases where such an intervention is proposed to the principal façade of a building that has a higher level of historic integrity or significance, the prominent introduction of such a modern detail could be considered to cause considerable harm. However, in this case the change would be made to an elevation that has already been significantly altered. If the appeal is allowed a condition could be imposed to secure details of the colour of this spacer, to ensure that it matches the external joinery colour. I am satisfied that this would be sufficient to ensure that the overall appearance of the building would be retained, and its special interest would not be harmed.
13. As the building is divided into flats the Council is concerned that following the grant of consent windows may be replaced at different times and some may not be replaced at all. The appeal is made by the management company who look after the external envelope of the building and advises that agreement from all the flat owners is necessary for the works to proceed. Thus, it would appear to be the case that the work can be carried out in one go, and it would be much more economical to do this rather than approach the project in a piecemeal fashion. In any case, the revised joinery details submitted at appeal demonstrate that the replacement windows would have a very similar appearance to the existing windows; so, if the work was carried out at different stages it would not necessarily harm the building's appearance.

14. There is nothing before me to demonstrate that the windows have been individually surveyed by a suitably experienced person with a view to repair, or whether alternatives such as the installation of secondary glazing or shutters has been properly considered. I appreciate that there are many cases where it would be necessary to consider alternatives to replacement.
15. However, in this case the existing windows are modern and of little significance as they appear to have altered the building's appearance significantly when they were introduced in the 1970s rather than replicating a pre-existing historic joinery pattern. I have also found that the proposed replacements would not cause harm. There is therefore no need for me to give further thought to whether they should be repaired or whether there are alternatives that may secure the same benefits to the occupiers of the flats. The reduced environmental impact that would be achieved through a repair and upgrading scheme is a consideration that falls outside the scope of the LBCA.
16. In summary, the proposal would not cause harm to the significance of the listed building. It follows that the proposal would also not lessen the positive contribution that the building makes to the character and appearance of the CA. It would thus preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the CA, in accordance with the requirements of the LBCA and paragraph 199 of the Framework, which states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Although development plan policies do not strictly apply to applications for listed building consent the proposal would also accord with the policies set out in the Council's decision.

Conditions

17. I have had regard to the planning conditions suggested by the Council. I have considered the conditions against the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance.
18. I have imposed a condition [2] to require the submission of additional joinery details and a condition [3] to ensure that the new joinery, any making good, and new finishes match the existing, to avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building. I have specifically referred to the exclusion of horns as the submitted contractor sample shows a multi paned top sash with horns, which is not an appropriate detail for a building of this age.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons above, the appeal should be allowed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR