



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2023

by J White BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/22/3313112

1 Blackstone Street, Blackstone, West Sussex BN5 9TH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the development of land carried out without complying with conditions subject to which a previous planning permission was granted.
 - The appeal is made by A Rains against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/1433, dated 28 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2022.
 - The application sought planning permission for the removal of existing cat slide and rear extensions and erection of a two-storey rear extension with associated remodelling works and alteration. Erection of a detached garage and store building to rear without complying with a condition attached to planning permission Ref DC/21/2317, dated 6 December 2021.
 - The condition in dispute is No 1 which states that: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in the schedule below. Schedule of plans/documents: Supporting Statement Heritage 12.10.2021, Location & Block plan Existing and proposed 1708/21/P/01A 01.11.2021, Floor plan Proposed 1708/21/P/02 12.10.2021, Elevation plan Proposed 1708/21/P/03A 01.11.2021, Floor plan Existing 1708/21/P/04 12.10.2021, Elevation plan Existing 1708/21/P/05 12.10.2021, Elevation & Floor plan Proposed garage 1708/21/P/06 12.10.2021, Design & Access Statement Planning Statement 12.10.2021.
 - The reason given for the condition is: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. I observed that works have commenced, and the development has been substantially implemented. However, an alternative to the approved plans in respect of the cladding board has been carried out. Instead of using a painted timber board, a white cementitious cladding board has been used. The appeal follows the Council's decision to refuse an application seeking to vary the approved drawings in order to retain the cementitious boards.
3. The Council refused the application due to concerns relating to the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and street scene, and its effect on the special historic interest of the Blackstone Conservation Area (BCA).
4. The main issue, therefore, is the effect of varying condition No 1 on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area bearing in

mind the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the BCA.

Reasons

5. The appeal building lies in the BCA on Blackstone Street. As a result, I am required by Section 72(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 or appearance of that area.
6. The building is a nineteenth century detached house that lies adjacent to a similarly aged row of terraced dwellings. The building and terraced dwellings are arranged close to the road and are prominent in views along it. Although there is a greater variety of materials in the wider area and the white painted timber cladding is distinctive to this part of the conservation area. Moreover, the collection of nineteenth century buildings, the distinctive white painted timber cladding over the terraced dwellings and traditional materials, and how they are experienced, which includes the appeal site, provides a positive contribution to the area. The prominence of traditional and local construction materials reinforces the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area and, insofar as it relates to this appeal, contribute strongly to the significance of the BCA.
7. Whilst the cementitious boards have a 'woodgrain effect' and are laid in an overlapping style, they have a noticeably different appearance. The boards have a manufactured and uniform appearance, that lacks finesse without the more organic, less uniform texture and appearance of timber which ages over time. As such, it is readily apparent that the cladding is a modern replacement, and it is noticeably different to the existing traditional timber boards in the surrounding area.
8. Notwithstanding the remodelling of the appeal property and that previously the building had a rough render finish, the cladding material and its detail significantly detracts from the historic context, and it appears as a discordant addition. The details of the changes that undermine the integrity of the building are noticeable from the street. In this particular location, the appeal building is experienced amongst a group of historic buildings where the built form and traditional materials, including the timber cladding, reinforce local identity and are positive contributions to the character and appearance of the BCA.
9. I note the suggestion that a condition could be imposed to require the replacement of the cementitious cladding with timber cladding when it is in need of replacement. However, there is no indication of how long this may be, and this would not offset the harm that I have identified in the meantime.
10. I note the appellant's comment that historic buildings should be allowed to adapt and modernise, including the use of modern materials. However, this is not sufficient justification to allow a material that appears discordant and harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the BCA.
11. For the above reasons, the cementitious boards detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the local area, and fails to preserve the character and appearance of the BCA.
12. Consequently, the proposal fails to comply with Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (November 2015) and Policy 3 of the

Woodmancote Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031. Together these policies seek, amongst other things, high quality design that reflects the architectural and historical character of its surroundings.

13. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. Given the scale of the proposal I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
14. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I acknowledge that the appellant considers that the cementitious boards are an ecologically friendly substitute for timber boards. Nevertheless, I have no evidence about the relative ecological benefits of the different materials over the lifetime of the alternative from manufacture to disposal once their useful life ends. I have insufficient information, therefore, to reach a view about whether the cementitious boards contribute more favourably in this regard. There is no substantive evidence that the cementitious boards would significantly outperform a well-maintained timber board or that it provides significantly better fire resistance or insulation.
15. Thus, I find that the harm that would arise from the proposal would not be outweighed by its public benefits. Accordingly, there would be a conflict with Paragraph 200 of the Framework as harm to designated heritage assets would not have clear and convincing justification and the Framework states that great weight should be given to a designated heritage asset's conservation.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed, and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

J White

INSPECTOR