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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2023

**by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 14 September 2023.**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/23/3321890**

**31 The Maltings, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 0RN**

- 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 Mrs Katie Pyne against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
  - The application Ref PL/2023/00282, dated 12 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2023.
  - The development proposed is replacement front door.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Malmesbury Conservation Area (CA).

### Preliminary Matter

3. I have used the description of the proposal from the Council's decision notice. It adequately and simply describes the proposed development instead of the much longer and detailed description given on the application form.

### Reasons

4. The CA mostly comprises the old town which is located on a hill surrounded on 3 sides by the River Avon and a tributary. The 12<sup>th</sup> Century Abbey and surrounding medieval development is at the core of the CA. Nonetheless, development up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is incorporated into it, such that buildings of varying designs from different eras contribute to the architectural and historic significance of the CA.
5. The appeal property is a 3 storey town house in a block of 4 houses within the relatively modern Maltings Housing Estate on the western side of the CA, between part of the old town walls and the River Avon. The area is identified as Character Area 15 in the Malmesbury Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) (MCAA). The MCAA describes the Maltings as having been sympathetically built and representing a unified whole, whilst noting that is architecturally different to the rest of the character of the Town.
6. Although house designs within the estate vary to some degree, the stone materials and detailing shared between house types provides a pleasing

uniformity. This is particularly the case with the front entrances to houses in the appeal site block which comprise stone effect arches fitted with an arched wooden frame and glass side lights either side of an arched wooden door.

7. The proposal is to replace the existing frame and door with a composite frame and a door comprising four oblong panels with a semi-circular panel above, instead of the six oblong panel design on the existing and neighbouring doors. The details provided with the application show it as a solid square topped door which, according to the appellant, would be reshaped to an arch by the supplier.
8. Guidelines for the area set out in the Malmesbury Conservation Area Management Plan (2010) (MCAMP) require good design of new and replacement windows and doors. The proposed door design would be at odds with the existing design, and those of other doors within the block. Furthermore, the appellant has not provided detailed drawings of the door and frame. In conservation areas it is particularly important to provide large scale drawings where important features of a building are to be altered or replaced. In this case, without them it is not possible to assess whether the frame and side lights would be like for like, and thus match those of neighbouring properties, as the appellant suggests.
9. I note that there is some variation in door types and materials on houses on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site. However, there is a greater degree of variation of house designs on that side of the road. Consequently, differences in door designs and materials are less obtrusive and harmful to the character and appearance of the area than would be the case at the appeal property.
10. Given the small scale of the development within the context of the Conservation Area as a whole, it would not harm its character. There would however be harm in terms of its appearance. The harm would be localised, limited and less than substantial but would nonetheless be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework), Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Policy 13 and tasks 8.1 and 8.3 of the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan (2015), the MCAMP and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which require high quality design which enhances local distinctiveness and conserves the historic environment.
11. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires justification and, in accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework, I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal. There would be modest benefits arising from the improved thermal performance of the building. However, such benefits would not outweigh the harm to the appearance of the building and the Malmesbury Conservation Area.

### **Other Matters**

12. I note that conservatories and extensions have been allowed on properties in the Maltings along the river frontage, as described in the MCAA, which are more obtrusive than the proposed development. However, these appear to predate the current development plan, and, in any case, I have come to my own view regarding the development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

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

*P D Sedgwick*

INSPECTOR