
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2024

by Tamsin Law BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/24/3338500

Flat 1, 32 Sydenham Road, Cotham, Bristol, BS6 5SJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Bethany Powlesland against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 22/02534/F.
 - The development proposed is described as "replace the existing external wooden framed single glazed windows to UPVC double glazed windows and the existing external wooden door to a Composite material."
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the Council's decision notice as this more concisely describes the proposed development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cotham and Redland Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a predominantly residential area with residential buildings located to the eastern side of the road and the rear gardens and associated ancillary buildings of dwellings on the western side. The residential buildings that front on to Sydenham Road are predominantly three and four storeys terraced and semi-detached buildings, some of which have been subdivided in to flats over time. Whilst the buildings vary in their design and use of materials, all are of a traditional design retaining many original features, such as bay and timber sash windows.
5. The building is located within the Cotham and Redland CA, the significance of which is derived from the well-preserved Victorian terraced and semi-detached buildings on regularly laid out street.
6. The appeal site is a ground floor flat that forms part of a large 4-storey buildings with bay window features to the front. The building was extended in the late 1970's. Whilst this is clearly a more recent addition, the design, materials, proportions and use of bay windows and timber sash windows ensures that the extension appears as a sympathetic addition to the host building.

7. The proposed development seeks to replace the existing timber windows and doors of Flat 1 with heritage uPVC windows and a composite door. The submitted information details that the proposed windows would be double glazed sash units with sash horns. The proposed door would be a grey composite door with a vertical obscure glazed panel and long vertical metal handle.
8. I acknowledge the appeal site is located in a more modern extension, but it has been carefully designed and detailed to respect the host building. The current timber windows and door require some upkeep; however, they are of a suitable material, design and construction technique that is authentic and characteristic of the period when the building was constructed. I accept that the design of the replacement windows emulates the existing windows, however uPVC and composite materials would have a modern patina and appearance and details such as moulding profiles cannot be emulated. As such, it would be readily apparent that proposed windows and door would be modern uPVC replacements. This would be heightened by the timber windows and doors remaining the rest of the building.
9. In this location the appeal site is experienced amongst a group of historic buildings along Sydenham Road where the built form and historic materials, layout and design reinforce the local identity and are positive contributions to the character and appearance of the CA. In the context of this appeal building the use of uPVC and composite materials would distract and be a discordant addition in an area which provides a positive contribution within the CA. Overall, the proposed replacement uPVC windows and composite door would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
10. The harm that would arise would be localised and therefore the impact on the listed buildings and CA as a whole would be less than substantial within the meaning of paragraph 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In weighing the public benefits of the proposal against the harm identified, the appellant has suggested that the proposal would provide energy/thermal efficiencies over the existing windows and provide improved security. These benefits are in comparison to the existing units, which do require some maintenance. I have not been provided with any information relating to energy/thermal efficiencies or improvements to security relating to replacement timber windows and door, or whether appropriate maintenance of the windows and door would improve the current situation. As such, the public benefits of the scheme are of no more than limited weight. I find in relation to paragraph 206 of the Framework that whilst the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits that would outweigh that harm.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies BCS21 and BCS22 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM26, DM30 and DM31 of the Bristol Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development contributes positively to the character of an area, reinforces local distinctiveness, and reflects predominant materials. The appeal scheme would also be contrary to paragraph 205 of the Framework which seeks to protect heritage assets.

Other Matters

12. Concerns regarding the processing of the application, including matters relating to time taken to determine are not issues that I can assess as part of this appeal. The validity or not of such matters do not affect the planning merits or effects of the proposal before me.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Tamsin Law

INSPECTOR