



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2025

by **L Francis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/24/3351715

12 South Hill, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3SY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant consent, agreement or approval to details required by a condition of a planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Peter Hatfield against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 24/D/00058/1 sought approval of details pursuant to conditions Nos 3, 4 and 6 of a planning permission Ref 23/P/01741, granted on 27 February 2024.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 30 July 2024.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear extension and single storey side extension (resubmission of 23/P/00962) (amended plans received on 20/02/2024 and 26/02/2024 showing the single storey element reduced in size).
 - The details for which approval is sought are: detailed drawings and/or samples of all new internal and external joinery details including windows (depth of reveal, method of opening, details of heads, sills and lintels), door frames.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background

2. The Council, in its decision letter of 30 July 2024, confirmed approval of the details provided pursuant to conditions 3 and 6 of the planning permission for the extension (Ref 23/P/01741). The same decision letter refused the details provided pursuant to condition 4 which required detailed drawings and/or samples of all new internal and external joinery including windows and door frames. The decision letter specified that the use of Residence 9 uPVC windows would be unacceptable.

Main Issue

3. In light of the above, the main issue is whether the appeal proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within the CA. The statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
5. The CA comprises part of Guildford town centre, running east from the river and encompassing areas to the north and south of the High Street. I consider its significance is derived largely from the undulating topography which has influenced the street layout and the far-reaching views across the valley. The High Street and

surrounding area reflect the historic development of the town centre, with its tightly packed plots around the High Street giving way to more spacious 19th Century housing development in the area immediately around the appeal site. South Hill and the streets around it are characterised by 19th and early 20th Century housing faced in brick, render or Bargate stone, along with traditional forms of fenestration with largely timber framed windows, natural slate or clay tile roofs, and stone or brick boundary walls.

6. The appeal site is a semi-detached single family dwelling dating from the 19th Century. It has a large garden to the side and rear. The land slopes away from South Hill. There is a substantial Bargate stone wall to the back of the pavement. This boundary treatment, combined with the topography means that the ground floor of the house is well screened in public views from South Hill. The side elevation is clearly visible in street views, although at a distance, and particularly so in winter without any planting cover. The house makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
7. The proposed windows at side first floor level, and rear basement, garden and first floor levels would be 'Residence 9', a brand of uPVC window. I acknowledge that the depth of the recess and sill would match the existing style; they would also exhibit articulation in the detailing. However, the uPVC frames would introduce a new material that has a more artificial texture and uniform finish and would not age in the same way as painted timber framed windows. Given that the side first floor window would be adjacent to an existing timber window, and would be visible from the public realm, it would appear discordant in the context of the other timber framed windows in the front and side elevations visible from the street. Whilst incremental, there would be harm to the CA from the use of a uPVC window in the first-floor side elevation of the extension.
8. The remaining uPVC windows would be confined to the rear elevation and would not be visible from the street. The details also show black aluminium framed sliding doors and fixed 'cassette' windows to the elevations of the side extension. The use of the aluminium frame in openings of this significant size in the new extension would be acceptable in such an overtly modern addition. They would not be visible from the public realm. I find these elements of the window details would preserve the setting of the CA.
9. I acknowledge that there are several examples of uPVC windows along South Hill and in the CA as a whole. I have limited evidence before me to ascertain whether the other examples in houses on South Hill received planning permission, if it was necessary. Cumulatively, such incremental alterations can harm the CA, and the historic presence of uPVC windows does not justify additional similar windows.
10. The examples I have been referred to in the CA which have received planning permission largely date from over 10 years ago, and in nearly all cases, before the adoption of the current development plan. The example which post-dates the adoption of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies adopted 2023 (Local Plan) is the replacement uPVC windows in Racks Court on Quarry Street (ref 23/P/00616) where the style of window is consistent with the more modern residential building.

11. Although I note the appellant considers the windows would be a reversible intervention, they would nevertheless be in situ for a considerable time and would consequently affect the appearance of the appeal property and wider CA.
12. For the reasons set out above, and despite my conclusions on the uPVC to the rear elevation and aluminium framed windows, the use of a uPVC window at side first floor level would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would therefore harm its significance. In failing to preserve the character and appearance of the CA, I find that the proposal, in the words of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits.
13. The proposed windows would offer environmental advantages in the form of heat and sound insulation and would reduce the building's carbon footprint. They would be durable and the need for maintenance would be reduced. The window installation would also support the local economy in terms of involving local suppliers and tradespeople.
14. I consider the benefits described are mostly private with the exception of environmental performance and local economic activity. Given the window installation would be at a small scale, I do not consider the public benefits are sufficient to outweigh the identified less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.
15. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policy D20 and the policies of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Policy D20 sets out that proposals are required to show how they respect and respond to the history of the place, surrounding context and the preservation or enhancement of the CA's special character and local distinctiveness.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the appeal proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Guildford Town Centre CA. As such it is contrary to the development plan read as a whole. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

L Francis

INSPECTOR