



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 April 2025

by A Wright BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A1530/W/24/3353169

Tribune House, 27-29 Sir Isaac's Walk, Colchester CO1 1JJ

- 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 Ms A Robertson of John Ray Ltd against the decision of Colchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 241435.
 - The development proposed is replacement of existing windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey commercial building on the south side of Sir Isaac's Walk within Colchester town centre. It lies within the Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area (CA), a designated heritage asset. There are single and multi-paned white timber sash windows on the upper floor facing the street. On the upper floor to the rear, there are smaller top opening windows and single paned sash openings located behind buildings facing St John's Walk.
4. Having regard to the Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (the Appraisal), the historic significance of the CA derives from it being a Roman walled town. Sir Isaac's Walk is part of a 17th century intra-mural street with a largely domestic one and two storey scale. There has been rebuilding and the south side is almost wholly modern, but some older buildings remain. The Appraisal identifies large sash windows as a feature of some of the 18th century buildings. Whilst there is some mix of window styles and materials nearby, at my site visit I observed many timber sash upper floor windows further east along the street. The appeal building makes a positive contribution to the architectural and historic interest of the CA due to its scale and traditional style timber sash windows on the upper floor.
5. It is proposed to replace the existing single glazed windows with UPVC double glazed heritage style sash windows, including astragal glazing bars. This would achieve a uniform style of windows across the building's upper floor but lead to the loss of traditional style timber framed openings. In comparison to painted timber windows, the proposed UPVC material would have an artificial texture, and a more

uniform and smooth finish. It would not weather or age in the same way as timber and so this modern material would be perceptible, even at a higher level. As such, the proposed windows would erode the appearance and character of the building, particularly in views from Sir Isaac's Walk.

6. For the reasons set out, the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA, although the harm would be less than substantial. Policy DM16 of the Colchester Borough Local Plan Section 2 2022 (LP) states that such developments should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appeal scheme would improve the thermal efficiency of the building in accordance with the Council's climate change policies, creating a more comfortable and rentable office space, although it seems reasonably likely that replacement wood framed windows would provide similar benefits. As such, the public benefits would not outweigh the harm to the CA caused by the proposed scheme. Therefore, the proposed development would be contrary to Policy DM16.
7. The appellant has installed this type of window in several other Conservation Areas and has provided photos of a building in Hitchin in which they were installed. However, there is limited information on the circumstances of these cases, so I am unable to compare them to the appeal scheme.
8. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would conflict with Policy DM16 of the LP where it requires development affecting the historic environment to conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

A Wright

INSPECTOR