



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/W/25/3358993

58A High Street, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 7HF

- 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 Mr Scott Deveson against the decision of Brighton and Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref is BH2024/0134.
 - The development proposed is to remove wooden sash windows to front (lounge and main bedroom) and replace with uPVC double glazed sash windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the Rottingdean Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. There is a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
4. The appeal property is located along the High Street, which exhibits an attractive range and variety of historic buildings, including a listed building adjacent at 62 High Street. The area forms part of the commercial heart of the village, characterised by a dense urban grain of predominantly small, closely-spaced vernacular buildings wherein the character of the buildings contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area.
5. The proposal relates to the first and second floor windows, which share the same design and are vertically stacked, mirroring those in the other half of the building (No.60). The existing white, timber sash windows appear to be unaltered, and the majority of the other buildings along this part of the High Street retain timber windows and doors. The design varies, but they are part of the building's heritage and reflect the architectural styles and craftsmanship of their time.
6. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – *Architectural Features* explains that windows are crucial elements of historic streetscapes and advises that original or historic windows should be retained unless beyond economic repair, and that on street elevations, the original material must also be matched.

7. There is nothing before me to suggest that the existing windows cannot be retained, and the introduction of uPVC windows directly conflicts with this guidance. I acknowledge that the appearance and design of uPVC windows have advanced, and the brochure of the windows proposed to be installed indicates dimensions and details similar in appearance to the existing sash windows. Nonetheless, the homogenous 'machine-made' appearance of uPVC would lack the distinctive subtleties and texture of painted timber windows. The windows would have a starker appearance and would contrast with both the other windows and the historic fabric of the building.
8. There are similar uPVC windows to those proposed on the upper floors of properties in Marine Drive, however, these lie outside the Conservation Area. From my observations, there are only a few examples of uPVC replacement windows along the High Street, and where they do occur, they generally diminish the character of the property. The background to these existing alterations is not before me, but the Council advise that there have been no recent planning approvals for such provisions with an Article 4 Direction relating to the front of buildings and an extension to the Conservation Area introduced in 2012.
9. Consequently, the replacement windows to part of the front elevation of the building would not make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness. They would significantly erode the cohesion of the building as a whole and with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its significance as a designated heritage asset. The harm would be less than substantial and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. The proposed windows would have a high energy efficiency rating with associated impacts on heating costs and ventilation, and there would also be reduced maintenance. As a tenanted property, it is suggested that single glazing will not comply with the impending landlord requirements, although I have not been provided with any details or evidence that other double glazing methods are not achievable. The affordability of the windows would be a private, as opposed to a public benefit and therefore is not a matter which weighs in favour of the proposal.
11. Nonetheless, great weight is to be given to the conservation of heritage assets, and I consider that the changes proposed are primarily a private benefit. Consequently, the benefits would not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset.
12. Thus, the replacement of the two front windows would fail to accord with the Brighton and Hove City Council's Development Plan policy CP15 (Part One) and policies DM18, DM21 and DM26 (Part Two). There would also be conflict with Rottingdean Neighbourhood Plan policies H2 and H3 and the Council's design SPDs. Together, these seek the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, and that development is of the highest quality, with the design taking into account the local character and distinctiveness.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR