



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2025

by R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3362677

26 - 48 Ashgate Road, Sheffield S10 3BZ

- 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 South Yorkshire Housing Association Limited against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03650/FUL.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Broomhill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a three-storey residential block of flats which provides supported living accommodation for adults. The site is located within the Broomhill Conservation Area (the CA) with the property occupying a prominent location close to the busy junction where Fulwood Road, Manchester Road, Lawson Road and Ashgate Road meet.
4. The CA as a whole is large and covers a wide range of buildings, uses and areas. The significance of the CA, in part, derives from the architectural and historic interest found within the fine examples of 19th Century buildings, which consist of a mix of large villas and terraced housing. The CA also benefits from areas of open space, mature trees and hedges, which provide a green and verdant quality to this urban setting.
5. Whilst in residential use, the appeal property is located within a District Shopping Centre which represents a vibrant part of the CA, with a range of commercial properties fronting onto Fulwood Road. The appeal building however fronts onto the residential street of Ashgate Road which represents a much more tranquil and quieter character area of the CA, in comparison to the busier, commercial section along Fulwood Road.
6. This change in character is in part assisted by the blocked off vehicular access between Ashgate Road and Fulwood Road, outside the appeal site, as well as the natural sloping topography of the area which results in Ashgate Road sloping down away from Fulwood Road.

7. In terms of appearance, the appeal property, and the adjoining church, are more modern buildings in comparison to the surrounding properties, having been built following the demolition of a previous church on the site. However, the appeal property has been constructed in a traditional design with its red brick walls and slate roof. The external elevations of the building also include traditional features such as projecting stone courses and recessed timber framed windows with stone cills, lintels and surrounds.
8. Whilst the properties in this area are predominantly of stone construction, with the notable exception of the brick-built Grade II Listed terrace row at Nos. 6 – 20 Ashgate Road, the traditional design and appearance of the appeal building, including its timber framed windows, ensures that it makes a positive contribution to the CA. To that end, the appeal property and the adjoining church are together identified as a building of townscape merit and, owing to its size and prominence, a focal building, within the Conservation Area Map.
9. The appeal property, being a three-storey block of flats, has a significant number of window openings across its three elevations which are visible from public vantage points within the CA. These windows are an important component in defining the appeal building's visual and architectural character, and its contribution to the CA.
10. The proposal seeks to replace all the existing bottom opening, white painted, timber framed casement windows with double glazed UPVC casement windows. The submission states that the high-quality replacement windows will be bottom openers, include vertical and horizontal glazing bars, and be completely flat when closed, so as to replicate the existing traditional timber windows in the most authentic way possible.
11. The use of UPVC windows in the appeal property would not however represent a traditional material. When seen from longer distance views I acknowledge that the proposed UPVC windows might not be distinguishable from the existing timber windows currently in the building. However, from closer views, UPVC windows tend to be bulkier than timber and appear as more obvious modern additions to buildings that have a traditional design, such as the appeal property.
12. This is because UPVC frames do not replicate the features, proportions or refinement of traditional frames. Even where heritage style UPVC frames are used, the crisper and more precise, uniform appearance of UPVC is discernible in comparison to timber frames. The use of UPVC window frames would consequently result in modern insertions into the appeal property and would represent an incongruous intrusion into this street.
13. I note the application was accompanied by a specification sheet which includes some details and images of the proposed UPVC window frames. However, it is not possible to discern with precise accuracy what each new window frame, glazing bar and detail would look like in comparison to the existing timber windows within the appeal building. In the absence of such information the concerns outlined above are reinforced.
14. The appellant has referred to buildings in the surrounding area having a variety of window frame materials, including the adjoining church which has metal windows. However, I have very limited information before me in respect of the planning history of these other windows and in any case, the existing metal framed windows in the adjoining church are not comparable to the proposed UPVC windows.

15. Where I did observe a limited number of UPVC windows within other properties in the area, they only demonstrated the harmful visual impacts of the use of this material in the CA. Furthermore, notwithstanding the limited examples of UPVC windows I did observe, the traditional detailing and materials of fenestration on properties in the surrounding area has largely been retained.
16. Additionally, in contrast to other examples, the appeal property is a prominent three-storey focal building in the CA, with a large number of window openings. It therefore has greater prominence and so its appearance is a more notable component within the CA. Consequently, the presence of some UPVC windows on other properties does not in itself justify introducing further such windows within the appeal building.
17. I therefore find that the proposed use of UPVC windows would diminish the interest and character of the building and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In this respect I consider that the harm to the significance of the CA is less than substantial. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 215 of the Framework this harm must be weighed against the public benefits.
18. The proposal would generate some limited economic public benefits during the installation of the replacement windows.
19. The appellant states that some of the existing windows in the property are not working properly and this is causing health and safety issues for residents. Reference has also been made to the excellent thermal energy rating of the proposed windows, which will save money, and the requirement for the appellant to achieve an energy performance rating level C.
20. I appreciate that some, or all, of the existing windows may need to be replaced for the benefit of the occupiers. Furthermore, I acknowledge that improving the energy efficiency rating of the building, and reducing carbon emissions, are environmental public benefits.
21. However, I am not convinced that these public benefits can only be achieved through the installation of UPVC framed windows within the appeal property. To that effect, I have limited substantive evidence before me that these benefits could not be achieved by using a traditional material for the replacement windows. As such, I attach limited weight to these public benefits in favour of the appeal scheme.
22. In view of the above, when taken together I find that the public benefits do not outweigh the considerable importance and weight I must attach to the special attention that must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
23. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. It therefore fails to accord with Policies BE5, BE15, BE16, BE17 and S10 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) and Policy CS 74 of the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) which together seek, among other things, to ensure that development is high quality and contributes towards attractive neighbourhoods; achieves good design and uses good quality materials; is of a high standard of design using traditional materials in CAs; that development which would harm the character or appearance of a CA will not be permitted; and that new development in Shopping Areas be well designed.

24. The development also fails to satisfy the requirements of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant sections of the Framework.

Other Matters

25. I have had regard to the appellant's comments in relation to the sensitive nature of the use of the building and the difficulty this could present when it comes to future maintenance of timber windows. However, buildings in general need on-going maintenance and repair, including in this case the installation of the proposed windows, which are likely to cause some disruption to residents. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that a maintenance programme could not be devised to ensure that residents are not unduly impacted by future maintenance works.
26. Additionally, the longevity of quality timber windows can be effective in time, a view supported by the fact that timber window frames are still in place within most of the properties in this part of the CA.

Conclusion

27. The proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

R Major

INSPECTOR