



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 2025

by Jennifer Wallace BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 JUNE 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/W/24/3354885

1 - 4 Childwick Green, Childwickbury, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6JJ

- 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 The Childwick Trust against the decision of St Albans City and District Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/23/2373.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement windows at 1 - 4 Childwick Green, Childwickbury, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6JJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/23/2373, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 23023 AL (0) 122, 23023 AL (0) 121, 23023 AL (0) 123, 23023 (0) 124, 23023 AL (0) 125, 23023 AL (0) 001, Window Section Detail (Residence R9 Window) and 23023 AC (3) 003.
 - 3) The replacement windows hereby permitted shall be R9 Residence Collection Windows finished in white with a wood grain effect.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's officer report raises concerns with the accuracy of the proposed plans. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the plans before me which the Council considered sufficient to validate the application. Should the development fail to be in accordance with those plans, it would be a matter for the Council to address using the powers available to them.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the Childwickbury Conservation Area (CA) and the locally listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within the Childwickbury CA where s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the

character or appearance of that area. The significance of the CA is derived from its historic interest in evidencing the development of Childwick Bury Manor, its estate village and the associated stud farm. It is also derived from its architectural interest.

5. 1-4 Childwick Green is identified in the Conservation Area Character Statement for Childwickbury (January 2018) (CACS) as a locally listed building. Its significance is derived from the contribution it makes to the Childwick Green area of the CA as one of the estate cottages around what was historically the hub of the hamlet. The CACS notes that the estate cottages have a distinctive colour scheme involving, relevant to this appeal, cream cills and white windows.
6. The building has timber framed, white painted window frames. These materials are consistent with those found in the adjacent property. While the CACS notes there is consistency among the estate cottages, it is acknowledged that there are a range of materials on display in the area. The proposed plans show windows which would retain the overall proportions and form of the existing windows. From a longer distance view, there would be no discernible change to the appearance of the building, nor would the windows appear more bulky. However, the use of PVC in the replacements would result in the loss of traditional materials.
7. St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994) (LP) Policy 85 requires materials within conservation areas to normally be traditional and natural with long term weathering characteristics. The loss of traditional materials would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that any harm to significance should have a clear and convincing justification.
8. The appellant has set out the adverse effects of the poor condition of the windows on occupiers of the property. There would be economic benefits arising from the works stage of the proposal. There would also be environmental benefits from the improved energy efficiency of the properties. I am satisfied that these benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the CA I have identified.
9. LP Policy 87 sets out that planning permission will not be granted for alterations to such buildings unless features of architectural or historic interest are preserved. This is a more onerous test than that set out in paragraph 216 of the Framework, which sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account, and a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. I consider the scale of the harm would be limited given the proportions of the windows would be retained.
10. The proposal would therefore have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the Childwickbury Conservation Area and the locally listed building. It would therefore be in accordance with the requirements of the Act, LP Policies 69 and 85 which require development to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. It would also comply with the requirements of the Framework as set out in Section 16 with respect to designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Conditions

11. The Council has suggested several conditions should the appeal be allowed. I have had regard to these in light of the advice contained within paragraph 57 of the Framework. I have imposed standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and approved plans to define the terms of the permission. I have also specified the finish to the windows in the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Jennifer Wallace

INSPECTOR