



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2025

by **David Murray** BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 AUGUST 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/25/3365809

39 Castle Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3UQ

- 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 Dana-Carmen Bondoc against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/01784.
 - The development proposed is alterations to glazing to existing projecting bay window to east elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. In registering the application the Council amended the description of the proposal from that set out in the application form and this was accepted by the appellant. I have used the amended description as this better describes the nature of the proposal.
3. The appellant describes the window as a 'bay' window while the Council describes it as a 'bow' one. The Concise Oxford Dictionary refers to *bay* as the space created by a window line projecting outwards from a wall while *bow* describes a shallow curve or bend. Therefore both words can be used to describe the window as one that projects outwards with a shallow curve or bend.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed alterations on the character and appearance of the host building together with the setting of nearby listed buildings and also the street scene and character of the Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area (GTCCA)

Reasons

Background

5. The appeal site comprises a two-storey building which fronts Castle Street in the centre of Guildford and the area forms part of the GTCCA. The entrance door to the property is on a side elevation which also contains a projecting bay window. The building is in commercial use on the ground floor. It is proposed to install a clear glass bow window with curved glass without the mullion glazing bars that presently exist. The appellant says that this alteration will help improve the energy rating of the building and give a better experience for customers waiting for treatment.

Effect on character and appearance

6. In assessing the effect of the proposed alteration on the building I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the GTCCA.
7. As well as the designated Conservation Area there are a number of listed buildings near the site although the closest of these is in Quarry Street. There are also locally listed buildings close to the site including the adjacent No. 39½, a former chapel.
8. The existing building has a variety of window styles on the front and side elevations in that while the main ground and first floor windows are of sash window proportions, two of the windows on the upper floor appear to have top hung elements and the ground floor windows appear to be fixed. Nevertheless all of the windows are multi-paned as they are subdivided by transoms and mullions and this is consistent with the age and architecture of the property. This architectural detailing contributes positively to the character of the building.
9. In terms of the surrounding area, I agree with the appellant that there are a multitude of window designs and forms in this mixed area of commercial and residential properties. I note that the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal for Area 1 refers to the predominant window type being vertical sliding sash windows. While sash windows tend to prevail on upper floors and residential properties, many of the shop fronts remain with multi-paned windows especially at No's 6, 8 and 10 Castle Street opposite the site, and there is a projecting bow window in Chapel Street. This multi-pane fenestration is a characteristic detailing which contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area.
10. Although a curved glass projecting window would in itself be an interesting architectural feature on the side of the property, the loss of the mullions and multi-paned form would detract from the historical character of the property and significantly weaken its contribution to the street scene. Moreover, I noted at the site visit that the bow window is particularly noticeable in the view through the archway over the footpath leading down from Guildford Castle and this very sensitive setting in a public thoroughfare makes the loss of mullions even more critical.
11. The Council also refers to the impact on the setting of the Kings Head pubic house further west on Castle Street. This is a grade II listed building. However, the intervisibility of the appeal site bow window and the pub is very limited and the proposed alteration would not be likely to be read together in the street scene.
12. Overall, I find that the proposed alteration to install a single glass pane bay window would harm the architectural character of the host building and diminish its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area rather than conserve or enhance it. As such the development would conflict with the provisions of Policy D1 and D3 of the Local Plan – Strategy and Sites (2019) in that it would not respond distinctively to local character and help conserve and enhance it, together with Policies D4, D18, D19 and D20 of the Local Plan -Development Management Policies (2023) for similar reasons.
13. In terms of the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework I find that this harm amounts to 'less than substantial harm' to the setting of the designated

heritage asset. While the scale of harm to the significance of the asset would be modest and relatively local, the Framework makes clear that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Heritage and planning balance

14. The harm to the heritage asset has to be balanced with other considerations including the economic, social and environmental impacts put forward by the appellant. I note the appellant's desire to modernise the premises but it is not clear why the loss of the mullions would make a difference to the growth of the business or the experience of customers.

I have taken account of the appellant's desire to improve the energy efficiency in the building which is currently rated as E, and therefore poor, but there are other ways in which traditional windows can be insulated to promote energy efficiency without harming their character.

15. I have also considered any public benefits arising from the proposal but these are at best limited to a potential minor saving in energy to help address climate change.
16. I conclude that the other factors arising in support of the proposal do not outweigh the harm to the heritage asset that I have identified, nor the conflict with the relevant policies in the development plan.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR