



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2025

by **R Lawrence BSc (Hons), PGDip (TP), MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/W/25/3365857

Riviera Court, Sandgate High Street, Sandgate, Kent CT20 3RP

- 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 Riviera Court Management Ltd against the decision of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.
 - The application ref is 24/1512/FH.
 - The development proposed is cladding of several external walls.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for cladding of several external walls at Riviera Court, Sandgate High Street, Sandgate, Kent CT20 3RP in accordance with the terms of the application ref 24/1512/FH, 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 2416-PL-06 Rev B – Proposed Elevations 1-4 Section and Details; 2416-PL-07 Proposed Elevations 5-8 and 2416-PL-05 Rev A Proposed Site Plan and Window Cladding Detail.
 - 3) No development above ground level shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development on the decision notice differs from that set out on the submitted planning application form. In the absence of any evidence that the appellant has agreed to the change in description, I have instead adopted that used on the application form. However, I have simplified the description of development for clarity and have removed unnecessary text that is not in itself development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Sandgate High Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a purpose-built block of flats rising up to four storeys, with a prominent frontage facing the beach and promenade. It is set well back from Sandgate High Street and lies adjacent to Granville Row. The surrounding development along the promenade is predominantly residential, comprising a mix of flats and individual dwellings. The building is largely finished in a white render, with limited areas of cladding, including a grey-clad extension at roof level. Nearby, St John Moore Court—another block of flats—shares a similar architectural style and scale.
5. The site occupies a central position within the Sandgate High Street Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
6. The significance of the CA lies in its representation of a historic coastal settlement, characterised by a linear pattern of development and a rich architectural heritage. The High Street forms the focal point of the CA, with roads and lanes such as Granville Row offering views towards the coast and promenade. The appeal building is visually prominent from Granville Row. Although it is of relatively modern construction, its presence within the Conservation Area (CA), alongside other contemporary architectural styles and materials, reflects the ongoing evolution of the areas' built environment. This progression illustrates how the CA accommodates architectural change over time while retaining its historic character. In this context, I consider that the appeal building makes a modest but positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
7. Cladding—both traditional and composite—is a recurring feature in the immediate vicinity and across the wider CA. While often found on smaller buildings, it is not exclusive to them. St John Moore Court, for example, incorporates extensive cladding and serves as a highly comparable example. Other such examples drawn to my attention include properties along the High Street and Granville Parade, with specific examples including Sandgate Castle Car Park and 82a Sandgate High Street. Importantly, each of these areas falls within the CA and the examples comprise well-established buildings that form part of the site context. Although I do not know the circumstances under which the cladding was installed, I give significant weight to their presence as part of the established character of the area.
8. The amount of cladding proposed in this case appears modest relative to the scale of the building such that render would still appear as the dominant material on the building. The proposed composite cladding would be white, maintaining the existing simple colour palette and preserving the building's overall style. The variation in materials would appear subtle, particularly given the established pattern of cladding use within the vicinity.
9. The existing render on the building shows visible signs of deterioration. Consequently, the proposal would represent a visual improvement over the current condition. While alternative methods of repair may exist, the use of composite cladding—already established within the CA—represents a practical and visually sympathetic solution in this instance.
10. The introduction of mixed materials, including subtle variations in texture and tone, would echo the treatment of nearby buildings such as St John Moore Court. The

proposed changes would break up the expanse of render, adding visual interest without disrupting the overall character of the building.

11. The loss of horizontal banding on the hexagonal ends is noted. However, the purpose of those bands is to visually break up the mass of render on a large-scale building. The introduction of additional cladding—on a building where composite cladding is already in use—would perform a similar, and arguably more effective, role in providing variation and breaking up the mass of render. The change in materials on the hexagonal ends would also enhance their appearance as contrasting features.
12. Although the building would be visible in views from the High Street, these views are distant and given the limited extent of the proposed changes and their appropriate visual impact, it follows that it would not appear harmful or out of character in longer distance views. The building will remain recognisable as a modern block of flats within the CA, and the proposal would not alter the perception of the area as a historic coastal town.
13. The proposal would result in minor but beneficial enhancements to the character and appearance of the appeal building. Given that the building is already of a modern architectural style, I find that the use of composite cladding—of a colour similar to the remaining rendered sections—would be appropriate and sensitive to the site context. The cladding would reflect the building's modern character, improve its visual condition, and introduce subtle material variation without detracting from its overall design. Importantly, the Conservation Area as a whole would be preserved.
14. I therefore find that the proposal would preserve both the character and appearance of the building and the CA. As such, the proposal would accord with Policies HB1 and HB8 of the Folkestone and Hythe Places and Policies Local Plan (2020). These policies, taken together, require that new development makes a positive contribution to its location and surroundings, respects existing buildings and land uses, and protects the character of Conservation Areas.

Conditions

15. The Council has suggested a number of conditions in the event of my allowing the appeal. I have considered these in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. A plan numbers condition together with a condition to limit the timeframe for implementation is required in the interests of certainty.
16. Although a condition to require further details of the materials has not been recommended, the details included within the plans do not specify the proposed colour (although this is indicatively shown elsewhere). It is necessary to control this, to ensure that the simple colour palette is maintained, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. As such, I have amended the materials condition to require precise details to be submitted.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would accord with the development plan as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore allowed and planning permission is granted.

R Lawrence

INSPECTOR