



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2025

by **S Harrington MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/W/25/3369855

Public Conveniences, North Street, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2JY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a grant of planning permission subject to conditions.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Sarah Towells, Wiveliscombe Town Council against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref 49/25/0003 was approved on 9 April 2025 and planning permission was granted subject to conditions.
 - The development permitted is change of use of building, with internal alterations, to a mixed use of public conveniences and Class F2(b) community/meeting space.
 - The condition in dispute is No 4 which states that: Notwithstanding the submitted information, the hereby approved windows shall have white painted timber frames and the replacement doors shall be timber/timber framed, and thereafter be so maintained.
 - The reason given for the condition is: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. Planning permission 49/25/0003 ('the planning permission') was approved subject to conditions, including condition 4, which requires that windows are white painted timber framed and replacement doors shall be timber/timber framed. However, the appellant wishes to fit UPVC framed windows.
3. In light of the above, the main issue is whether condition 4 is reasonable and necessary having regard to the effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the Wiveliscombe Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the CA and is a single storey building of utilitarian character commensurate with its purpose as public conveniences. The Wiveliscombe Conservation Area Appraisal Document 2007 (WCAA) outlines the special interest of the CA derives from both historic and architectural interest. The WCAA states that the townscape form has evolved through a process of both planned and organic growth, with the blending of Victorian industrial buildings into the small town matrix providing a texture strongly evocative of that period. Furthermore, the WCAA outlines that the CA contains an interesting variety of both polite and more vernacular architectural forms, with a broad time span represented with buildings or structures present from most periods between medieval to present day.

5. The WCAA also highlights that the historic and architectural character of the CA has been greatly harmed by the insertion of plastic windows which now appear dominant in many locations. Indeed, I observed numerous examples in the vicinity of the appeal site, including those directly opposite.
6. Nevertheless, white painted timber framed windows, and timber doors do still remain within this zone¹ of the CA, and due to their architectural and historic interest, provide a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. Far from justifying the use of UPVC material at the appeal site, the surrounding examples of replacement windows in period properties are readily noticeable in the historic context of the CA due to their uniform finish and generally larger frame width, and highlight the impact that inappropriate windows can have on the historic integrity of the wider CA.
7. Whilst the appeal building is currently noted in the WCAA as a negative building, due to the stone and render road facing elevation which lacks windows, it is recessive in the street scene. However, implementation of the planning permission would result in two landscape sized casement windows in the road facing elevation and large doors adjacent the pavement, which would attract the eye and increase the prominence of the building.
8. Due to the size and prominence of the fenestration, UPVC would appear as an overtly modern material inconsistent with the period property detailing seen elsewhere. Despite numerous examples of UPVC elsewhere, this would further erode and detrimentally harm the character and appearance of the area and detract from the significance of the CA
9. Therefore, I find the harm to the CA would be less than substantial. Even so, the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of such assets. In those circumstances, the Framework states that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. In this case, the proposal would support the economy during the conversion process and would contribute to bringing an existing building back into use as a community/meeting space with associated social and economic benefits.
11. However, there is nothing before me to indicate that the above stated benefits could not be achieved by using timber material that would be less harmful to the CA. I therefore find the benefits to be modest and do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
12. Consequently, I conclude that condition 4 is reasonable and necessary in order to preserve the character and appearance of the area, including the CA. Removal of the condition would conflict with Policy CP8 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012) which, amongst other things, seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Conclusion

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

S Harrington INSPECTOR

¹ Zone 1 as outlined within the Wiveliscombe Conservation Area Appraisal Document 2007