



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2026

by G Sylvester BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/W/25/3374663

15 Home Farm, Park Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 6QU

- 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 Mr Phil Clark against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01283/RET.
 - The development is the replacement of existing windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the installed window surrounding the front entrance door. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted insofar as it relates to all other windows and doors that have been installed at 15 Home Farm, Park Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 6QU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/01283/RET, and the Location Plan insofar as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have not been provided with drawings showing the windows and doors that have been installed and which are the subject of this appeal. Therefore, I have assessed their effects based on what I observed at my site visit. I have also had regard to the manufacturer's product information that is before me.
3. In the grant of planning permission above and for the purposes of this decision, I have described the 3 panes of glazing set within frames on both sides of the appeal dwelling's front entrance door and above it, as the installed window surrounding the front entrance door.
4. If the appellant wishes to ascertain whether the installed windows and doors in the appeal scheme are development requiring planning permission, they may make an application for a formal determination under Section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the Act"). Within the context of an appeal under Section 78 of the Act it is not within my remit to make that formal determination. However, I shall consider the evidence as to whether planning permission is required for the installed windows and doors insofar as it is material to this appeal.
5. The windows and doors the subject of this appeal are not permitted development as those rights were removed by a condition of the original planning permission for the conversion of the former farm building into dwellings. The condition removing those permitted development rights under Classes A, C, D and E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)

Order 2015 was reimposed in a modified form by a subsequent allowed appeal decision¹.

6. In determining this appeal, I shall have regard to my statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
7. The Council concluded that the appeal scheme is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it has not altered the size of the building. Based on the evidence before me I see no reason to disagree.

Main Issues

8. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - Whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Tring Conservation Area (“the CA”) and its effect on the significance of the host building and group of buildings as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA).
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area including the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape (“the CNL”).

Reasons

Heritage assets

9. On the evidence before me, including the Tring Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals, March 2019 (“the CACA”), the significance of the CA as a whole is largely derived from the diverse architectural and historic character of its buildings, including those with a strong association with Lord Rothschild and the architect William Huckvale. They reflect the origins and expansion of Tring as a historic market town, particularly during the early-nineteenth century.
10. The appeal property is one of several residential dwellings contained within a group of buildings in the Home Farm complex and associated with the Tring Park estate that are located within the CA. As documented in the evidence, including recent appeal decisions², those dwellings were created in the 1990s through the conversion of historic buildings described variously as former agricultural barns or stables. The CACA identifies them as component buildings of Tring Park and possessing historic interest through their former function, design and materials which link them to many other buildings in the town. They form a very important part of the history, character and appearance of the CA.
11. The building of which the appeal property forms part has a domestic appearance and residential character, resulting from its conversion to dwellings, which the evidence indicates included some rebuilding work. The converted barns have doors and windows typical of dwellings. Rooflights and plastic meter boxes and boiler flues are common. The external area around the buildings includes

¹ APP/A1910/W/24/3336853

² APP/A1910/W/24/3336853 and APP/A1910/D/23/3320173

landscaped gardens enclose by walls, ornamental planting and hard surfaced access roads and car parking.

12. However, the group of buildings can still be read as a traditional farm complex, which has been sensitively converted, and they have a consistent appearance. Visual clues to the former uses of the buildings remain apparent, including their form and layout, along with materials and features such as the traditional wooden beehive style roof vents and finials. Consequently, the building of which the appeal property forms part of makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA and is of sufficient historic interest to be considered as a NDHA.
13. Based on the map provided by the Council showing the extent of the CA, the appellant questions whether the appeal building lies within it. However, those previous appeal decisions describe the appeal site as within an expanded area of the CA, and the appellant submitted one of them³ which sought to remove permitted development rights. The CACA describes Home Farm as within the CA and screenshots from the Council's website show the same. Therefore, on the balance of the evidence before me, the appeal site is within the CA.

Effects on heritage assets

14. The frames of the doors and windows that have been installed are made from uPVC and the front entrance door appears to be of plastic or composite construction. They are installed within the existing openings in the walls of the appeal dwelling and the evidence suggests they replaced all pre-existing timber units, except for the triangular shaped window in the north facing roof slope.
15. On the evidence before me, the pre-existing timber windows and doors in the appeal dwelling would likely have matched those fitted to the other dwellings in the same building. They are of a style fairly typical of residential dwellings, as described by a previous Inspector⁴, and they are materially different to those shown on the photographs of the appeal building before completion of its conversion to dwellings in the 1990s. As such, the existing timber windows are likely to have been fitted at that time and are unlikely to be original to the building's construction. Therefore, no fabric reasonably considered historic has been lost through the appeal development.
16. The installed window surrounding the front entrance door consists of 3 glazed panes that are set against the sides and top of the door frame. They have created a thicker profiled frame around the front entrance door than the equivalent window in the adjoining property. As those 3 glazed panes are not subdivided by framing bars they have elongated proportions in the horizontal and vertical directions that are significantly different to the equivalent windows in the facades of the other dwellings in the converted building. Consequently, the frame and glazing proportions of that window have a harmfully discordant and incongruous appearance that has eroded one of the unifying elements of the building in views from the access road and nearby properties.
17. All other ground floor uPVC windows in the appeal scheme appear to have slightly thicker frames than the existing timber framed windows in the building. However, they also have a symmetrical and more elegant appearance than those existing

³ APP/A1910/W/24/3336853

⁴ APP/A1910/D/23/3320173

windows. This is because they have opening casements subdivided by narrower glazing bars on both sides, whereas the existing timber units have an asymmetric appearance with a full height opening casement on the one side and a top-hung opening pane in a thick surround with a fixed pane beneath on the other. In all significant respects the differences between their frame and glazing proportions are minor and those installed uPVC windows are in-keeping with the design and proportions of the existing timber windows in the building.

18. I could just about detect that the frames of the uPVC french-doors installed on the appeal property's rear wall and to the first floor Juliet balcony are very slightly thicker than the equivalent existing timber units in the building. However, the difference in frame and glazing proportions of those doors is only slight and would be hardly detectable to the passerby or casual observer, including from nearby properties and the access road.
19. Even on close inspection, the colour finish of all window frames and french-doors installed at the appeal property is barely any different to the colour of the existing timber ones in the building. The subtle sheen to the woodgrain effect finish of those frames has a level of reflectivity that is not discernibly different to that of existing window/doors frames of nearby properties.
20. I am advised that the doors and windows of the buildings at Home Farm are painted approximately every five years and if the colour of the window frames had to be changed, the colour of the uPVC frames installed at the appeal property would be inconsistent with others in the building. However, I have determined the appeal based on what I saw at my site visit, and it has not been shown that the uPVC window frames could not be painted in a different colour as the appellant suggests. In any case, there is nothing of substance before me that would mandate, in land-use planning terms, the repainting of the windows in a different colour.
21. When stood in the appeal property's rear garden it is possible to undertake a very close inspection of a window that has been installed in the north facing wall and an existing window in the same wall of the adjoining property. Those respective windows are separated from one another by about 1 metre and set in openings of the same size. Whilst the uPVC windows and doors installed at the appeal property have thicker glazing than is fitted to the existing timber ones in the building, there was no discernible difference in the reflectivity of the respective glazing, even on close inspection.
22. With prior knowledge of what I was looking for at my site visit, I was able to detect, on very close inspection of the windows and doors as installed at the appeal property, visible clues that the frames are made from uPVC and not timber. The edges to the frames and opening casements have a sharpness to them that is accentuated slightly by the thin black line of the weather seal between them. This gives the uPVC frames a more defined and precise appearance than the timber frames which have softer edges and a level of patina that is derived from the accumulation of paint layers, including where it has spread to cover hinges and areas of glazing, and areas where it has peeled exposing the timber beneath.
23. However, even on such a close inspection, the visible differences between the materials of the installed uPVC doors and windows and the existing timber ones are very slight. To detect those visible differences an observer must look very

closely at the windows from short viewing distances. Such a close comparison is only really available from the rear garden of the appeal property and the closest rear gardens of nearby dwellings where examples of uPVC and timber framed windows can be seen relatively close together. Even then the uPVC material is not obvious or incongruous by comparison to the painted timber frames.

24. The visible differences between the materials of the installed windows/doors and the existing timber ones would be hardly discernible when seen by a passerby or a casual observer from further away, such as in views out of the rooms of nearby properties or the access road running alongside the building. The lower halves of the uPVC window frames in the north facing elevation of the appeal property are largely obscured by the boundary wall in views from the access road. Whilst the appellant may choose to apply paint to the uPVC frames to emulate the patina of the aged timber ones, I have based my assessment on the condition of the installed windows and doors at my site visit.
25. The existing front entrance doors in the building have a traditional aesthetic insofar as they appear to be constructed from timber and with no integral glazing panels. The exterior surface of the front entrance door as installed at the appeal property has a wood grain appearance and a series of deep vertical grooves that seek to mimic the joints between individual timber boards. It has a strong sense of solidity and a simple traditional appearance that is not significantly diminished by the small integral window framed by an architrave type moulding. Furthermore, it has a slightly rough texture with a limited sheen and a level of reflectivity no greater than that of the existing front entrance doors in the building. For those reasons, the front door as installed at the appeal property is in-keeping with the character and appearance of the building.

Conclusions on heritage effects

26. Windows and doors with uPVC frames will not always be acceptable in period style buildings as they can have highly reflective finishes and chunky frames that are visually jarring in certain circumstances. However, each case must be determined on individual merit and based on site specific circumstances and judgments. Therefore, my decision should not be read as indicating that uPVC frames will be acceptable in all instances and my split decision on the appeal scheme reflects that.
27. In this instance, except for the installed window surrounding the front entrance door at the appeal property, an aesthetically pleasing design of windows and doors has been arrived at which are balanced, symmetrical and with elegant, traditional frame and glazing proportions. The differences between the appearances of those windows and doors, and the existing timber framed ones in the appeal building do not result in a harmful mismatch of windows and doors or a discordant appearance. The building's consistent appearance has not been harmfully eroded.
28. Therefore, except for the window surrounding the front entrance door, the installed windows and doors have not harmfully eroded the contribution that the windows make to the significance of the building. Consequently, they have a neutral effect on the significance of the building as a NDHA and the character and appearance of the CA as a designated heritage asset.
29. Accordingly, those windows and doors are consistent with Policy CS27 of Dacorum's Core Strategy 2006-2031, Adopted 2013 ("the CS"), which requires

development to positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas. They are also consistent with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the CS insofar as they seek to avoid visual intrusion and respect the materials of adjoining properties. Whilst uPVC is unlikely to be a traditional material within the terms expressed by Policy 120 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011, those windows are consistent with that Policy insofar as it requires development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

30. The consistency with those Policies outweighs the conflict with the strict guidance in Saved Appendix 7 of the LP, which states that window design should match the existing windows in terms of size, proportions, divisions and materials. However, there is a degree of consistency with the Appendix's guidance insofar as external finishes of a development should match the existing as closely as possible in terms of type, colour and texture.
31. Conversely, for the reasons given above the installed window surrounding the front entrance door in the appeal property has a harmfully discordant and incongruous appearance that has eroded one of the unifying elements of the building. As such, it harms the significance of the building as a NDHA, and the character and appearance of the CA. Accordingly, that window conflicts with CS Policies CS11, CS12, CS27, LP Policy 120 and the guidance in Saved Appendix 7 of the LP, the requirements of which are set out above.
32. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss is a matter of considerable importance and weight and requires clear and convincing justification. Framework Paragraph 215 requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
33. Framework Paragraph 216 requires that in weighing applications that directly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. I shall return to those matters in my conclusion.

Landscape and scenic beauty CNL

34. On the evidence before me, the landscape and scenic beauty of the CNL appears largely derived from a combination of open fields and woodlands beyond the edge of the built-up area, which includes the landform of the Chiltern Hills. Historic buildings are likely to be part of that landscape. I have a duty to seek to further the statutory purposes of the CNL as a protected landscape.
35. The appeal site's contribution to the landscape and scenic beauty of the CNL appears largely derived from its appearance as a traditional farm complex that has been sensitively converted to residential use. It is set in spacious surroundings that give the impression of a gentle transition between the urban areas of Tring and the open fields and woodlands in the CNL.
36. Although the Chilterns Building Design Guide 2010, states that PVC doors can spoil the intrinsic qualities of older buildings, I have found this not to be the case. Even in the case of the window surrounding the entrance door, it is the framing

and glazing proportions as distinct from the material they are constructed from that is harmful to the building as a NDHA and to the CA.

37. In this instance the differences between the appearances of the uPVC windows and doors that have been installed at the appeal property and the timber ones in other dwellings in the building would not be readily discernible in landscape views across the CNL. In those views the appeal development would still read in the landscape as a traditional farm complex.
38. For those reasons the appeal development is not harmful to the landscape and scenic beauty of the CNL. It is therefore consistent with CS Policy CS24 insofar as it requires development to have regard to the policies and actions set out in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide, and for it to conserve the special qualities of the CNL, and to protect the skyline of the scarp. For the same reasons I find no conflict with Framework paragraph 189 insofar as it seeks to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes.

Other Matters

39. In this instance there are significant differences between the frame and glazing proportions of the installed window surrounding the front entrance door in the appeal dwelling and the other equivalent windows in the building. Those differences are readily visible from outside of the appeal site, including from the access road and nearby properties. In having regard to the principles in *Burroughs Day v Bristol City Council [1996] 1 PLR 78* and the appeal decision⁵ before me, it is my opinion that the window surrounding the front entrance materially affects the external appearance of the building and constitutes development requiring planning permission within the meaning of Section 55 of the Act. It is unnecessary for me to reach an opinion on whether all other windows and doors in the appeal scheme amount to development as it would not alter the outcome of the appeal.
40. That the appellant undertook the appeal development without first applying for planning permission has no bearing on my assessment of the planning merits of the appeal scheme. Section 55 of the Act makes no distinction between development that is proposed and that which has been carried out.
41. The appeal decision in Surrey⁶ and the appellant's survey of uPVC windows in the Tring CA are of limited relevance to my considerations in this appeal as they relate to different buildings in different contexts and I have not been provided with any details of the designs of those windows.
42. The appellant's reasons for replacing the pre-existing windows and doors have limited relevance to my considerations in this appeal, which are based on the effects of the windows and doors as installed. There is nothing of substance to suggest it was necessary to remove the pre-existing windows and doors to comply with the building regulations.
43. Whilst the occupiers of other dwellings within the Home Farm complex of buildings have invested considerable funds on maintaining their timber windows and doors, it does not affect the merits of the appeal development.

⁵ APP/Y5420/C/18/3205531

⁶ APP/C3620/D/18/3216929

44. It is not for me to determine whether the whole-life environmental effects of uPVC windows/doors are worse than timber ones. On the balance of probability, I share the Council's position that the appeal development provides insulation benefits to the appeal property. The installed uPVC windows and doors meet current regulatory standards and are likely to better insulate the dwelling from heat loss than the older timber windows/doors they replaced.
45. Consequently, given the scale of the development, the appeal scheme is expected to deliver a small public benefit by reducing carbon emissions from the property's heating system, helping to combat the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change and supporting the transition to net zero. Whilst this would likely deliver a small private benefit in improving the occupiers' living conditions and reducing heating costs, climate change is a matter of public interest. The appeal scheme has also likely delivered a small benefit to the economy through money spent in the supply chain for windows
46. The Council has not suggested that any conditions should be imposed if the appeal was allowed and I have no reasons to disagree.

Conclusion

47. Even if I were to give significant weight to the public benefits of the appeal scheme, particularly to the likely reduction in carbon emissions in accordance with Framework Paragraph 167, it would not outweigh the harmful effects of the installed window surrounding the front entrance door of the appeal property. Those public benefits do not amount to the clear and convincing justification for the harm caused to the significance of the building as a NDHA and to the character and appearance of the CA by that window.
48. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the installed window surrounding the front entrance door at the appeal property is contrary to the development plan as a whole. The material considerations, including its benefits, are insufficient to outweigh that finding. Consequently, that window is unacceptable, and the appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to it.
49. All other windows and doors that have been installed at the appeal property are consistent with the development plan as a whole and the appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to them.

G Sylvester

INSPECTOR