



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2026

by **S F Barnes MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/W/25/3374625

19 Tabor House, 5 Coggeshall Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 9DB

- 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 Mrs Gillian Wheeler against the decision of Braintree District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01108/FUL.
 - The development proposed is to remove 4x timber windows and replace with white foiled UPVC.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to remove 4x timber windows and replace with white foiled UPVC at 19 Tabor House, 5 Coggeshall Road, Braintree, CM7 9DB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/01108/FUL, 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 the following approved plans: Location Plan, Untitled elevation drawing labelled 'Proposal of Window Replacement', and Untitled floor plan (indicating position of 4x windows to be replaced).
 - 3) The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the details specified in the Product Designs prepared by Bluemanor Windows Ltd dated 07 March 2025 and shall thereafter be permanently maintained in accordance with those details.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the interests of certainty, I have used the address given in the appeal form as this includes a street name.
3. As the site is within a conservation area and proximate to a listed building, I am mindful of my statutory duties. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) sets out that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the significance of heritage assets.

Reasons

5. Tabor House is a substantial former school building dating back to the early 20th century, later converted into a number of flats. It is a part 2 and part 3 storey building within a spacious landscaped plot. It is arranged around a roughly rectangular 2-storey atrium with a glazed apex roof. The proposal relates to an elevation which faces onto that apex roof, at a top floor flat.
6. The building has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset. The Framework states that the effect of an application on the significance of such assets should be taken into account in determining the application. Through its scale, architectural composition and distinctive features at its frontage, the appeal building forms an imposing presence on the Coggeshall Road streetscene, and in this respect it is a positive contributor to the Braintree Town Centre Conservation Area ('the CA'). As it relates to this appeal, its significance is associated with its period, timber-framed and generally sash-style windows found at its frontage and its outer side and rear elevations. The outer side elevations are of a plainer design compared to the frontage, but are nonetheless appreciated from the street and surrounds.
7. To the north of the appeal building lies the Grade II listed John Ray House (List Entry Number: 1393723). Constructed in the 1920s in a neo-Georgian style, this single-storey building was the former school's gymnasium. As it relates to this appeal, its significance is therefore primarily associated with its historic and architectural interest and as an example of educational architecture with its functional link to the school. Its setting is largely identified as its immediate surroundings and its location on Bocking End allows an appreciation of its architecture and historical significance as part of the school. Whilst the functional link has since been severed, the buildings contribute to the significance of each other by serving as evidence of their respective, previous uses.
8. The site and surrounding area form part of the commercial core to the CA, which extends over a much broader geographical area. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the significance of the CA is primarily associated with its mixture of buildings of ages and styles, resulting in a broadly traditional appearance. Timber, single-glazed sash windows are a prevailing feature. However, I also observed many proximate examples of replacement windows in modern materials, such as UPVC, at less sensitive rear and side elevations including at 3 Roman Road and 1-9 St Lawrence Court.
9. The proposal would introduce UPVC, woodgrain effect frames containing double-glazed window units at an elevation which is not visible from any public vantage point outside of the appeal building. Although window openings of the opposite flat look onto this elevation, it is the apex roof which dominates the outlook in these private views. Due to its siting, the affected elevation is not one of the prominent outer elevations, featuring the large sash windows, that positively contribute to the architectural significance of the appeal building.

10. The proposed units would maintain the fenestration pattern, casement opening style and colour of existing timber windows in this location and complement the building's appearance in these respects. Whilst UPVC does not replicate the material used elsewhere on the appeal building, its use in this discreet location would not affect the architecture of the characterful external elevations. Nor would the loss of the original building material harmfully undermine its significance. Accordingly, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the building overall. Therefore, the proposal would preserve its significance as a non-designated heritage asset and its contribution to the streetscene.
11. The use of modern materials, such as UPVC, on less sensitive elevations is an established feature in this part of the CA. The materials proposed would therefore be appropriate in the local context and not harm its significance in this respect. The proposed minor elevational alterations would not diminish the extent to which the building's design and detailing demonstrate its former use, nor that of John Ray House. Consequently, the proposal would not cause harm to the setting of John Ray House, insofar as that contributes to its significance. Therefore, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and preserve the setting of the nearby listed building.
12. The Council considers the fact that the subject windows cannot be seen from any public vantage points to be unusual, and I agree. Given the specific circumstances of the proposal before me, I am not convinced that granting planning permission would necessarily set a precedent for other similar developments. This argument has not therefore led me to an alternative conclusion on this main issue.
13. I have considered the appeal decision referred to by the Council relating to a scheme in Romford (Ref APP/B5480/D/19/3227917). I agree that, in principle, a lack of visibility does not remove the potential for harm. However, unlike the proposal before me, the design of the extension in that case was found to cause harm to the building and to the significance of the conservation area.
14. Concluding on this main issue, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the significance of heritage assets. The proposal would accord with relevant provisions of Policies LPP 1, LPP 47, LPP 52, LPP 53 and LPP 57 of the Braintree District Local Plan 2013 - 2033 Section 2 (2022). Amongst other considerations, those policies seek a high standard of design in all developments and the use of building materials of high quality and appropriate to the local context.

Conditions

15. In addition to a standard timescale condition, it is necessary to specify the approved plans for certainty. In the interests of character and appearance, the proposal must also be carried out in accordance with details submitted.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

S F Barnes

INSPECTOR