
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2026

by **C Rose BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/25/3376118

Flat 1, 9 Stafford Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 2BQ

- 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 Ms Vivien Gregory against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/FUL/2025/05295.
 - The development proposed is replace white single glazed windows with white double glazed UPVC windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal relates to a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).
3. There is no dispute between the main parties that the proposal, by reason of its small scale, would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Dorset National Landscape. As I have no reason to disagree, I do not need to deal with this further.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Swanage Conservation Area (the Conservation Area), and the effect on the character and appearance of the host building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within the Conservation Area and comprises part of a terraced building consisting of flats. The terrace has a fairly consistent design and elevational arrangement of bay windows, often comprising sliding timber sash windows with slim frames complementing the original design and character of the terrace. The Conservation Area Quality map accompanying the Swanage Area Character Appraisal (the Appraisal), identifies the terrace as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
6. The appeal site lies within Zone 6 of the Conservation Area, as identified in the Appraisal. The Appraisal states that this zone is defined by its historic boundaries, containing an attractive and largely intact collection of Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces and that this part of Swanage has a 'functional distinct character

and a historic development integrity which allows distinction from its neighbours...'. It also states that Zone 6 'forms an important textured backdrop to the contemporary centre of Swanage which is immediately visible from along the seafront' and that sash windows are the predominant type of windows.

7. In light of the above, the significance of the appeal building lies, in part, to its connection to the historic development of Swanage and its associated backdrop to its centre. It makes a positive contribution because it is consistent with, and reinforces, the architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area as a whole due to the prominence of the terrace, its architectural quality, and its use of traditional Purbeck stone and timber sash windows. The Council considers the building to be a non-designated heritage asset, and I see no reason to disagree.
8. The proposal seeks to replace the existing timber sash windows with uPVC alternatives with the appellant stating that there are no disadvantages from this. However, uPVC is a modern, non-traditional material that would sit uncomfortably alongside the historic fabric of the building. Timber, with its natural grain, subtle irregularities and capacity to weather and develop character over time, reinforces the building's historic qualities. By contrast, uPVC presents a uniform, synthetic finish that remains unchanged, lacking the texture and ageing qualities that make timber an essential component of the building's authentic appearance. Consequently, the proposed windows would appear conspicuously modern and incongruous and would detract from the well-preserved historic character, fabric and appearance of the building, undermining its architectural integrity.
9. The appellant states that the proposed VE Classic windows would replace the existing with new windows that will be of the same size as the original. Whilst elevation plans and brochure details of the proposed windows have been provided, the appellant has not provided any detailed comparison between the exact dimensions of the existing and proposed windows. It is likely that the frames and glazing bars would be chunkier than that found on the traditional timber-framed windows. Thus, the proposal would alter the building's character and erode its historical authenticity.
10. Taking into account the buildings position, and due to its degree of prominence, it follows that the identified negative effects to the non-designated heritage asset would also harm the positive qualities of the Conservation Area as a whole. In these regards, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and thus harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.
11. I acknowledge that there are buildings nearby and within the Conservation Area that have uPVC windows, including the adjacent building forming No.8 Stafford Road and other dwellings within the terrace. Nevertheless, I have not been presented with any planning history for these properties and so it is not clear to me whether these replacement windows were granted planning permission or not. Furthermore, there are also a number of timber windows within the terrace and wider surrounds of the appeal site. From my observations, the use of uPVC window material is neither a prevailing historic characteristic of the area nor one which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. Retaining the timber-framed sash windows in the appeal building would help preserve its authenticity and ensure that its character remains intact, rather than further contributing to the gradual loss of historic character in the area.

12. It follows from the above that I find that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would also cause unacceptable harm to the non-designated heritage asset. Within the overall context, the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The Framework also states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm to its significance. In addition, the effect on the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.
14. Economic benefits would be delivered through the manufacture and installation phase of the proposed windows along with the general investment into the property. However, the contribution would be very modest given the small scale of the scheme.
15. The appellant states that the new windows would conserve heat and energy, avoid any damp ingress and improve the environment and living conditions. Nevertheless, I have not been provided with any compelling evidence in these regards and as such I am not persuaded that similar benefits could not be achieved by a proposal which would be less harmful to the heritage assets, or equally that the repair and modification of the existing windows could not achieve similar benefits.
16. Therefore, in this instance, the public benefits, even when taken collectively, do not outweigh the identified material harm to the heritage assets.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposal would fail to conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Swanage Conservation Area and would fail to preserve the significance of the host building as a non-designated heritage asset. It would therefore fail to satisfy the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policies E2 and E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan (2018 – 2034). Amongst other things, these state that great weight will be given to protecting, and where possible enhancing, Purbeck's designated heritage assets and their settings and expect proposals to demonstrate a high quality of design that positively integrates with their surroundings and reflects the diverse but localised traditions or building materials found across Purbeck.

Conclusion

18. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

C Rose

INSPECTOR