
Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 05/09/13

gan Kay Sheffield BA(Hons) DipTP
MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 04/10/13

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 05/09/13

by Kay Sheffield BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 04/10/13

Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/13/2199848

Site address: 1 Belmont Road, Wrexham, LL13 7PW

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mrs Fiona Hawkrige against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/2013/0059, dated 28 January 2013, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2013.
- The development proposed is the replacement of existing single glazed windows with double glazed windows.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Fairy Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Fairy Road Conservation Area. It is located within a predominantly residential area where there is a wide variety in the age, design and size of the properties. The appeal property is a two storey double fronted dwelling at the end of a terrace which turns the corner from Belmont Road onto Ruabon Road. Unlike the remainder of the terrace which sits at the back of the footway, the appeal property is set back a short distance behind a front boundary wall.
4. The front elevation of the property has a bay window at ground floor level to either side of the central front door and at first floor level there are two smaller windows aligned centrally above the ground floor bay windows. It is proposed to replace the existing timber windows with uPVC frames and those to the ground and first floor windows furthest from Ruabon Road have already been installed.
5. The Council has confirmed that the area is the subject of an Article 4 Direction the aim of which is to ensure that any alterations or developments to the frontages and front curtilages of dwellings are in sympathy with the special character of the area. As a result planning permission is required for the change of materials to the external walls

of a dwelling which includes windows and window frames. In this respect the Council's information sheet on Conservation Areas and Article 4(2) Directions states that the replacement of traditional materials with modern is unlikely to be acceptable, in particular the replacement of traditional timber windows with uPVC.

6. Whereas the appeal property is not specifically mentioned in the Fairy Road Conservation Area Assessment, 1999 the terrace is identified as being the only one within the Conservation Area which fronts directly onto the pavement. The Assessment recognises that many buildings in the area have been altered and that unsympathetic alterations have a particularly detrimental impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area but considers that the changes are reversible. In addition Policy EC7 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, 2005 states that alterations to existing buildings in the Conservation Area must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.
7. I acknowledge that the use of uPVC window frames are prevalent in the area, being found in the modern detached property to the south and the adjoining terrace to the north as well as in a significant number of other properties in the area. However, I have no evidence that any of the replacement windows installed have been authorised by the Council. Nevertheless there are properties in the area with timber framed windows which define the character of the Conservation Area the Article 4(2) Direction seeks to protect and enhance. Although in the case of the appeal property the original cills and headings to the windows which have been replaced have been retained, the use of uPVC is nevertheless contrary to the Council's guidance.
8. The appellant contends that the replacement frames have been designed to replicate the original windows and whilst I do not dispute this, there are elements of the design which fail to maintain the proportions of the original windows. The use of top hung opening lights in lieu of sliding sashes have introduced heavier frames to the upper sections of both side sections of the bay and to the first floor window which contrast with the thinner frames to the lower sections which are more in keeping with the dimensions of the original frames.
9. The condition of the previous windows and the appellant's desire to improve energy efficiency, noise insulation and security are acknowledged. However, there is no substantive evidence that double glazed windows from more traditional materials would not be as efficient as uPVC windows in this respect. I do not consider that this is sufficient to outweigh the concerns already identified in respect of the appeal, which has been treated on its merits.
10. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, it is therefore concluded that the development would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Fairy Road Conservation Area, contrary to Policies GDP1 and EC7 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, 2005. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Kay Sheffield

Inspector