



Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Appeal Decision

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 01/05/13

Site visit made on 01/05/13

gan Kay Sheffield BA(Hons) DipTP
MRTPI

by Kay Sheffield BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru
Dyddiad: 15/05/13

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers
Date: 15/05/13

Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/13/2193199

Site address: 2 Chapel Street, Holt, Wrexham, LL13 9DF

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 Mr Matthew Quinton against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/2012/0619, dated 2 September 2012, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2012.
- The development proposed is the replacement of windows and doors.

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 Holt Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site, which lies within the Holt Conservation Area, is in a predominantly residential area where the properties vary in age, design and size. The appeal property forms part of a two storey terrace of seven dwellings which are built directly at the back of the footway. The properties are of brick under a slate roof and each has a door and window at ground floor level with single window above. The materials, together with the regular arrangement of the fenestration and the ornate timber porches over the entrance doors combine to create an attractive terrace which makes a significant contribution to the character of the street scene and the Conservation Area.
4. The Council has confirmed that the Conservation Area is the subject of an Article 4(2) Direction, introduced in 2000. The effect of the Direction is that planning permission is required for development which would front a highway or open space and where it would materially affect the appearance of a dwelling. This would include the change of materials to the external walls of a dwelling including external doors, windows and window frames. The doors and windows in the front elevation of the appeal property have been replaced and the subsequent application for planning permission which was refused by the Council is the subject of the appeal.

5. The Holt Conservation Area Assessment, 1999 identifies the terrace as being of interest and states that its appearance is enhanced by the detail to the doors and windows which comprise of sixteen pane mullioned timber sash windows and vertically panelled tongue and grooved doors. The Assessment recognises that the use of uPVC windows and doors has eroded the character of the Conservation Area but considers that this can be addressed in time by the reintroduction of traditional windows and doors in older properties and states that the thickness and moulding of glazing bars and the size and arrangement of the panes are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement window and door types that respect the age of a building.
6. Whilst the replacement windows have been installed in the original openings in the front elevation of the appeal property, the frames are in uPVC and are not sliding sashes but divided by a central horizontal bar with the upper section forming a top hung opening light. Although the two sections to the windows are subdivided following the same pattern as recorded in the Conservation Area Assessment, it is achieved by bars located internally within the sealed unit rather than glazing bars which form an integral part of the window. As a result the material and detail of the windows does not accord with the traditional character of the dwelling and detracts from the appearance of the terrace within which it is situated, to the detriment of the street scene.
7. I noted during my site visit that only three of the dwellings in the terrace have timber windows, the remaining three, excluding the appeal property, having replacement uPVC. However, it is understood that the windows were installed in these three properties before the Article 4(2) Direction came into force and as their future replacement would require planning permission, the Council would be in a position to ensure the use of appropriate materials. It is also noted that in respect of one property uPVC windows installed after the Direction came into force were replaced with timber windows following enforcement action. Therefore although there are properties with uPVC windows in the terrace, it is evident that it is the Council's objective that this trend will be reversed in time, to the benefit of the character of the terrace and the wider Conservation Area.
8. It is acknowledged that there are other properties in the area with uPVC windows and in particular the modern dwellings to the south east of the site and the school to the south. However, the use of uPVC does not detract from the modern design of these dwellings in the same way as it detracts from the historical character of the appeal property and the terrace within which it is situated.
9. I observed only one property within the terrace with a vertically panelled tongue and grooved door as described in the Conservation Area Assessment, the remainder had various designs of timber replacements some with glazed panels. In contrast with these the replacement door to the appeal property is solid and whilst from close view it is clear from the finish that the door is not timber, it is more difficult to discern the difference in materials in the context of wider views within the street scene. Although the Council has not submitted any evidence to justify its contention that the material is inappropriate and visually I consider its harm to the street scene is not as significant as other doors within the terrace, I nevertheless conclude that the replacement door fails to enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
10. The condition of the previous windows and the appellant's desire to improve energy efficiency and noise insulation are acknowledged. However, there is no substantive evidence that double glazed timber windows would not be as efficient as the uPVC windows installed in this respect. It is accepted that there is a difference in the cost of

timber windows compared with uPVC as well as ongoing maintenance. However, 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.

11. 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 Holt Conservation Area, contrary to Policies GDP1 and EC7 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, 2005. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Kay Sheffield

Inspector