
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2015

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16 July 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/15/3004119

Andover House, 9A Eton Avenue, London NW3 3EL

- 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 Andover HM Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2014/3165/P, dated 29 April 2014, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2014.
 - The development proposed is to change the existing timber windows to UPVC windows.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Eton Avenue is characterised by handsome and well-crafted late 19th and early 20th Century Victorian style houses. There are occasional modern infill buildings, including No 9A which is a late 20th Century red brick block of flats. Architecturally, it does not attempt to reflect the fine detailing of the more historic buildings and it is not noted as a positive feature in the Council's Belsize Conservation Area Statement. It has, however, been designed to reflect the form, proportions and articulation of nearby buildings and therefore sits comfortably within the street scene.
 4. The dominant window type in the immediate area is painted timber sash windows. The proposal is to replace No 9A's aging, white-painted timber casement windows with matching white upvc windows. The Council admits that in considering the planning application it looked at the neighbouring building, 9 Eton Avenue, instead of No 9A. It nevertheless maintains that the use of upvc windows in a conservation area as proposed is not supported.
 5. I see no justification for a blanket ban on upvc windows in the area. The Conservation Area Statement advises that generally the use of such materials
-

will not be acceptable, but this does leave room for consideration of each case on its merits.

6. In this case, No 9A's windows are a particularly important feature of the building, making up a large proportion of its main elevations. Any replacement windows here would therefore need to be carefully considered to ensure that the building's appearance is not degraded. Upvc has a different, more artificial appearance to timber, both when new and when aging. The use of upvc on this scale would emphasise the contrast between this modern building and its more traditionally designed neighbours, detracting from the coherence and harmony of the street scene.
7. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. It therefore conflicts with the aims of Policy CS14 of the Camden Core Strategy and Policy DP24 of the Camden Development Policies, to secure development of the highest quality design that preserves and enhances heritage assets. I give this matter considerable importance and weight.
8. I find that the degree of harm to heritage assets in this case would be less than substantial. I agree that the replacement of the current windows is desirable, not least to improve thermal efficiency. I am sympathetic to the need to minimise costs and maintenance. I find, however, that these benefits do not outweigh the harm identified.
9. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR