



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2018

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/D/17/3189886

1 Friars Mews, Pinwell Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2LW

- 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 & Mrs Donald Cromarty against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/17/04188/HOUS, dated 18 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2017.
 - The development proposed is replacement windows and doors to property, replace bargeboards and fascia to property, new guttering and downpipe.
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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 Lewes Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the Lewes Conservation Area. The area is a mix of commercial and residential uses. It has a generally intimate character but is busy with pedestrians and vehicles. Designs, types and ages of buildings differ including some modern designs. Many of the materials are traditional although there are sufficient modern materials and designs present to add interest and variety to the Conservation Area. The area in which the appeal site is located contains a significant variety of buildings and uses both within and adjoining the Conservation Area. The recently completed cinema includes a very modern extension and the station car park is a dominant feature of the immediate surroundings. To the north are older style mainly residential buildings and to the south much more recent housing development, some just outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. The appeal site is located at the one end of a terrace of three houses adjacent to a public car park.
4. I am mindful of my statutory duty arising under section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
5. I consider that the proportions of the frames and detailed design would be important as there is general uniformity of design between the three properties. In respect of the rear elevation, the detailed design of the large

windows to the rear would be patio doors rather than French windows. Only the upper part of the rear ground floor windows would be visible due to the tall wooden fence on the boundary. However, the first floor is highly visible from the well-used adjacent car park and its entrance from Pinwell Road. The three properties have similar rear elevations at first floor and due to the very differing design of the first floor windows the alterations would look very out of place. This would disrupt the rhythm of that elevation of the terrace, and would cause harm to the appearance of the property, the terrace and the Conservation Area. The front door would have a very different design to the existing door. As it would face towards a private road and the ground floor at the front is set down it would not be highly visible in the street scene, and there would be a small negative impact on the Conservation Area.

6. In terms of the use of UPVC the proposed windows would have a wood effect which would be acceptable given the visible modernity of this terrace, and the change in material would be unnoticeable to passers-by except on very close examination. Having regard to the variety of materials in the immediate area I consider the use of UPVC in this particular instance would be acceptable. The smaller replacement windows would be very similar in design to the originals even with a slightly thicker section, and would not have an impact on the Conservation Area. However, these matters would not outweigh the harm I have found. The conservatory at No 3 Friars Mews referred to by the appellant is not prominent in the street scene, and set away from public views. It is not directly comparable to the scheme before me for these reasons.
7. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the appearance of the Lewes Conservation Area. It would be in conflict with Policy H5 (bullet a) and Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan 2003. These amongst other things seek new development that conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the area and should respect the character, rhythm and layout of neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

Conclusion

8. When the proposed development is considered in the context of harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, the harm may be considered as less than substantial. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that any such harm be assessed against any public benefits including securing its optimum viable use. The windows appear to be in a poor condition and detract a little from the appearance of the property. I accept that the windows in particular at the first floor have caused significant problems for the owners. The replacement windows would result in increased energy efficiency and very much improved water proofing reducing overall maintenance costs, these in the broadest sense would be public benefits. However, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have found.
9. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR