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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2024

**by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 December 2024

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/24/3348466**

**12A Primrose Terrace, St. Michaels Street, Shrewsbury, SY12EY**

- 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 Mr Ian Putnam against the decision of Shropshire Council.
  - The application Ref is 24/01704/FUL.
  - The development proposed is the replacement of front windows.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the replacement windows on the character and appearance of the Shrewsbury Conservation Area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal property (No 12A) is a mid-terraced house within Primrose Terrace on St. Michaels Street. It lies within the Castlefields and Spring Gardens Special Character Area within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area (CA). Primrose Terrace consists of 31 dwellings of uniform design, set around 2 metres in from the rear of the pavement and behind low front walls. The dwellings have front windows of identical sash design, most in original wooden frames, but some (around 30%) having replacement windows in UPVC. The terrace is subject to an Article 4 direction which operates in addition to the CA designation, and which removes permitted development rights to its frontage. The proposal would involve the replacement of three front, wood-framed sash windows with uPVC wood-grain effect double-glazed sash windows of similar design.
4. Policy CS6 of the Council's Adopted Core Strategy (CS) requires development to respect and enhance local distinctiveness. Policy CS17 requires development to protect and enhance the high quality and local character of the Council's built and historic environment, and not adversely affect their heritage values. Policy MD2 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development document (SAMDev), indicates that development should respond appropriately to the form of existing development, and that it should reflect locally characteristic architectural design and details, including materials. Policy MD13 states that heritage assets will be protected, conserved and sympathetically enhanced and restored by avoidance of harm or loss of significance.

5. The appellant contends that the proposed replacement windows would be of a high-quality heritage design and would appear as very similar to the wooden windows that they would replace. In addition, he contends that a large number of the houses in the terrace already have replacement uPVC windows, and that the proposed windows at No 12A would not, therefore, be harmful to the character or appearance of the terrace.
6. The appellant also refers to two recent planning appeal decisions, one in Basingstoke and one in Shrewsbury itself, in which the inspector has allowed the replacement of wooden window frames with uPVC windows similar to those proposed at the appeal property.
7. I have not been provided with full details of the proposed replacement windows, which apparently come from the Masterframe 'Bygone' range, but I acknowledge that these would be of high-quality design and materials, and would be similar in many respects to the prevailing wooden frames, albeit with some variations. However, in the earlier appeal case in Shrewsbury (Ref: APP/L3245/D/23/3322347) the replacement frames were within a detached house, set back further than the adjacent houses, and were already in existence, such that the appeal referred to a 'retrospective' application.
8. The inspector in this case noted that the fact that the appeal building was detached, helped to make any differences with other properties hardly discernible. One such difference was the inclusion of central ventilation bars that were not a characteristic of sash windows in the area. In this earlier case, therefore, the windows would have appeared uniform only in the context of the detached house, and the fact that the house was detached served to make any differences with nearby properties less obvious.
9. In the current case, the windows would be seen clearly in the context of other nearby houses in the same terrace, and differences in design would be more obvious. The existing uPVC windows in the terrace appear to be of generally good quality and are of similar design, but with noticeable minor differences, including corner jointing/treatment and width/depth of frame surround. From the submitted planning statement, it would appear that such differences would also apply to the proposed replacements.
10. The appellant has made reference in his appeal statement to the Historic England Guidance Note "Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading", 2017, (HEGN). I note that this document recommends repair of traditional windows above replacement, and that, if the window is beyond repair, that the replacement window should match the form, detailing and operation of the window to be copied. In particular, the profiles of all the window components including head, jambs and cill of the frame and the stiles, rails and glazing bars of the sashes or casements should be copied, while old glass should be carefully salvaged and reused.
11. I have no details as to whether the windows in the appeal property could be repaired or whether they are beyond repair. They do not appear as being beyond repair. In any case, while the proposed window types would replicate the existing frames in many respects, there would be differences which would be apparent, albeit slight. Moreover, just because there are already a number of uPVC frames along the terrace, this does not automatically mean that another example, even one of high quality design, would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the

area by reason of further diluting the local distinctiveness of the design and materials of the majority of the windows in the terrace.

12. The appellant contends that, even if the proposal were considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA, the harm would be less than substantial and would be at the lowest end of the spectrum, and that it would be outweighed by benefits of improved energy efficiency. I accept that the harm would be less than substantial, but the HEGN indicates that energy efficiency can also be improved by utilisation of draught-proofing measures and use of secondary glazing. It notes that some of these measures enable buildings that retain historic windows to be more energy efficient than buildings whose windows are simply replaced with double glazed units. In such cases, similar benefits could be achieved without the harm of using uPVC frames that present differences from the traditional forms.
13. In conclusion, I find that the proposed frames would be harmful to the character and appearance to Primrose Terrace and, therefore, the wider CA, albeit to a small extent. The harm would be less than substantial but would not be outweighed by the limited benefits of improved energy efficiency at the front of the house, particularly given that such benefits could potentially also be achieved by repair and maintenance measures taken with regard to the existing traditional frames or by use of new bespoke timber framed windows. On this basis, the proposal would conflict with national policy relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment, as set out in paragraphs 212-215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and also with Policies CS6 and CS17 of the CS, and with Policies MD2 and MD13 of the SAMDev. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

*J D Westbrook*

INSPECTOR