

**R02**

**F/TH/18/0114**

PROPOSAL: Replacement of existing timber windows with white UPVC windows

LOCATION: 14 Domneva Road Westgate On Sea Kent CT8 8PE

WARD: Westgate-on-Sea

AGENT: Mr Philip Palmer

APPLICANT: Mr Leadbeater

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse Permission

For the following reasons:

1 The site lies within the Westgate-On-Sea Conservation Area, and it is the duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing its character and appearance. The replacement of the 16no. ground floor and first floor windows with UPVC will result in the loss of uniquely traditional timber windows and materials from a building that is prominently located within the Conservation Area, resulting in an inappropriate and visually intrusive form of development, detracting from the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and paragraphs 17, 64, 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the corner of Domneva Road and Westgate Bay Avenue within the Westgate-On-Sea Conservation Area. The property is a detached 3-storey building with bay windows at ground floor level, large sash style windows at first floor level, and dormer windows within the roof space. The building is brick built with very traditional features, and is highly prominent within the street.

#### RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

F/TH/17/1367 - Replace existing timber sliding sash windows with white UPVC sliding sash windows and replace existing fascia, soffit, gutter and downpipes to UPVC (Refused: 27/11/17) - The refusal reason was: *'The site lies within the Westgate-On-Sea Conservation Area, and it is the duty of the Council, as the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing its character and appearance. The replacement of the ground floor windows, along with panels, fascia, soffits, guttering and downpipes with UPVC will result in the loss of uniquely traditional timber windows and*

*materials from a building that is prominently located within the Conservation Area, resulting in an inappropriate and visually intrusive form of development, detracting from the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and paragraphs 17, 64, 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

F/TH/16/1180 - Replacement windows at second floor level from UPVC to vertical sliding UPVC with external Georgian bars (Granted 02/11/2016)

F/TH/10/0132 - Replacement of uPVC top hung casement windows with uPVC sliding sash windows (Granted 01/04/2010)

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application is for the replacement of 16no. existing timber windows with white UPVC windows within the ground floor, and the west and east elevation of the first floor, which serve Flats 1 and 2 in the property.

### DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

#### **Thanet Local Plan (2006)**

D1 - Design Principles

### NOTIFICATIONS

Letters have been sent to neighbouring properties, a site notice has been posted and an advert has been placed in the local newspaper. No responses have been received.

### CONSULTATIONS

**TDC Conservation Officer** - A number of concerns are raised in relation to the application, principally that the UPVC material would emphasise the incongruity of the material and the design of the windows on the building and degrade the street scene, which would be harmful to the Conservation Area.

### COMMENTS

The application is called to committee by Cllr Bambridge for consideration of the impact upon the street scene, and the energy efficiency benefits for the building.

#### **Principle**

The site is located within the built up area where the principle of development is considered to be acceptable. The main consideration in relation to assessing this application is the impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area within which the site lies.

## Character and Appearance

The site lies within the Westgate-On-Sea Conservation Area and is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in which it is located. The property is one of the original villas of the Westgate on sea seaside resort development of the late 1860s. The impact of the proposal to replace the 16no. windows from the existing timber framed windows, to the proposed UPVC material is of concern as the significance of the Conservation Area derives substantially from the form and appearance of these villas characterising the seaside resort. The position of the building on the corner of Domneva Road and Westgate Bay Avenue has a considerable presence in the local street scene and is in a prominent and visible location.

The uniformity of the building and its appearance within the conservation area is an important consideration for any changes to fenestration. The windows proposed for replacement are quite unique in design and while the proposed replacement UPVC windows are similar in appearance on plan, the proportions are not the same as the existing timber framed windows. Solid glazing panels are proposed at the bottom sections of the longer windows numbered 2-12 which would change the existing proportions of the windows numbered 2-9 which have glazing bars in the bottom section. The Conservation Officer has provided comments in relation to the change in appearance of UPVC compared with timber and considers the change in materials would take away the finesse of the original timber material. The agent advised in relation to the previous application, which was refused (F/TH/17/1367) that because of the uniqueness of the windows, it would be difficult to be able to manufacture exact replacements with the same proportions in a UPVC material.

Currently, windows 2-5 have glazed panels at the top and windows 6-12 have timber panels. The proposal details that all of the larger windows will have a UPVC panel at the top. The Conservation officer considers that it is not clear from the submitted details whether the glazing bars on the proposed windows would divide the glazing into separate units, or would sit on top of the glass, or be positioned between the glazed units. If they would be part of the frame, they would appear crude when compared with the original glazing bars. If they were stuck onto the external façade of the double glazed units, they would create false vertical glazing strips. Also, if inserted inside the glazed unit they would lack the depth and shading of traditional glazing bar profiles.

Currently the 16no. windows proposed for replacement are all timber windows and whilst the proposal would create a uniform change across the ground floor level of the building, it is considered that this would be a detrimental change. It would remove the original windows and the original proportions, which currently contribute positively to the Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer considers the conservation of heritage assets carries great importance and weight and the windows are irreplaceable. Any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

The Conservation Officer considers there are more appropriate ways of improving the performance of historic traditional windows and as such there is no public benefit on the proposal to outweigh the harm to the heritage asset. The existing timber windows appear to

be in good or at least reasonable condition presently and it is not considered that sufficient justification for the loss of the original timber framed windows has been provided. Whilst paragraph 95 of the NPPF supports energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings, it is considered in this instance that the benefits which could be achieved through the upvc material is outweighed by the harm which would be caused to the conservation area.

It was noted at the site visit and on the basis of the previous application for other windows within the building, that there are some existing UPVC sliding sash windows within the building already, following consent granted as per the site history. Application ref. F/TH/16/1180 sought to improve a situation where UPVC top hung windows had been inserted to the building prior to the designation of the Conservation Area, and sliding sash UPVC windows were considered to be an improvement to an existing situation. The 16no. windows which are being considered in this application are predominantly at the ground floor on the north and north western corner, the most prominent corner of the property and are more unique in design and larger in scale than those which have been considered at the upper floors. It would be more difficult as previously detailed for a replacement of the original windows to be provided in the UPVC material, which results in the loss of the original proportions.

A number of appeals have been dismissed in relation to the replacement of timber windows in conservation areas in Thanet. For example, Flat 1, Chandos Square, Broadstairs (APP/Z2260/W/16/3151500) when the inspector considered that because the property was visible from a public place that harm would be caused and that the claimed public benefit of thermal efficiency was not sufficient to outweigh the harm created. An application at 2 Alexandra Road, Broadstairs (APP/Z2260/C/16/3158122) was also considered to cause harm and dismissed as there would be virtually no public benefit arising from the development sufficient to outweigh the harm to the conservation area. It is considered in this instance that the windows are prominently visible and whilst there is currently a hedge running around the perimeter of the property that partially screens some of the windows, it could be cut down at any time making the ground floor windows more visible. The public benefits are not considered to outweigh the harm caused to the conservation area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would be harmful to the Conservation Area and is contrary to Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and paragraphs 17, 64, 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Living Conditions**

The nature of the scheme means that once the windows are in place they are not considered to have any impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring property occupiers. The proposal may provide some improved thermal efficiency to the occupiers of 14 Domneva Road, but detailed information has not been provided.

### **Conclusion**

In terms of weighing up the impact of harm, the conservation of heritage assets carries great importance and weight. They are irreplaceable and any harm requires clear and convincing justification. Whilst double glazing would provide a more energy efficient building and would

contribute towards mitigating the effects of climate change and the aspirations of paragraph 95 of the NPPF, it is not considered that the option to replace the 16no. original windows, which do not follow the same proportions and design as the existing timber framed windows is an acceptable solution. The proposal would result in a harmful impact on the Conservation Area and is considered to be contrary to Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and paragraphs 17, 64, 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is therefore recommended that members refuse the application.

**Case Officer**

Lauren Hemsley

TITLE: F/TH/18/0114

Project 14 Domneva Road Westgate On Sea Kent CT8 8PE

