

PLANNING COMMITTEE NORTH – 13 August 2019

APPLICATION NO: DC/19/2007/FUL

EXPIRY DATE:

APPLICATION TYPE: Full

APPLICANT: for Mr James Rudd Park Holidays UK Ltd

LOCATION: 24 Suffolk Road, Lowestoft NR32 1DZ

PARISH: Lowestoft

PROPOSAL: Change of front elevation windows on ground and first floor. Change of front door and surround.

CASE OFFICER : Chris Green

Email: Chris.Green@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 01502 523022

MAP



Scale 1:750
Date 31/07/2019

0 0.0125 0.025 0.05 Kilometers



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application is for the replacement of windows to the frontage of a commercial property in the adopted Lowestoft Conservation Area with upvc replacements.
- 1.2 The application is presented to the Committee as the applicant is the son of a serving Elected Member.
- 1.3 It should also be noted that the officer opinion differs from the opinion of the Town Council, who have recommended approval.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located within the Town Centre area of Lowestoft as defined in the Local Plan.
- 2.2 This site is also located within the Conservation Area
- 2.3 The South Lowestoft Conservation Area Appraisal describes Suffolk Road: *“extends from Station Square to the east and continues the commercial character from London Road North and Station Square, although at a lesser scale. Curving round to meet Battery Green Road, the streetscape encloses views and comprises buildings of late 19th and 20th century date, of understated but varied architectural style. Shop fronts again dominate the ground floor, with large plate glass windows across the Godfreys store to the north and remnants of historic shop fronts to the south such as pilasters and console brackets. The construction of short terraces and individual buildings by separate owners along Suffolk Street has resulted in a shifting roofscape throughout the street, and particularly along its south side”*.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of upvc vertical sliding sash windows and a composite timber door to the frontage of this unlisted commercial building in the extended Lowestoft Conservation Area
- 3.2 Planning permission is required because while no Article 4 direction was put in place when the South Lowestoft Area was extended across the bridge to encompass this area, this was because as all the property encompassed was either commercial or flats, they enjoyed no permitted rights to change appearance, as confirmed by Part 7 of the 2015 General Permitted Development Order. This covers Non-domestic extensions and alterations and allows alteration generally but at paragraph A.1 (aa) article 2(3) land (which encompasses Conservation Areas , is excluded from the right thus requiring planning permission.

4 CONSULTATIONS/COMMENTS

- 4.1 Lowestoft Town Council *“The Planning and Environment Committee of Lowestoft Town Council considered this application at a meeting on 11 June 2019. There seems to be some confusion if this application is for number 22 or number 24 as the photograph submitted is*

misleading. Perhaps it is a retrospective application? However, the Committee were in agreement to support the replacement windows and door”.

4.2 Third Party Representations – none received

5 PUBLICITY:

Category	Publication date	Expiry	Publication
Conservation Area,	30.05.2019	20.06.2019	Beccles & Bungay Journal
Conservation Area,	30.05.2019	20.06.2019	Lowestoft Journal

6 SITE NOTICES

The following site notices have been displayed: General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: Conservation Area, Date posted: 30.05.2019 Expiry date 20.06.2019

7 PLANNING POLICY

7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1990

7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) forms a material consideration in the determination of this application.

7.3 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Part II

7.4 East Suffolk (Waveney) Local Plan 2019

- WLP8.29 – Design
- WLP8.39– Conservation Areas
- Supplementary Design Guidance “Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document” - April 2012

8 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 This application seeks permission for the replacement of timber windows in the conservation area with upvc windows of vertical sliding sash type. The design and access statement submitted as part of this application does not attempt to describe the condition of the existing windows merely stating that the existing are of poor thermal performance. The photo supplied by the applicant with this application, represents No.22, adjacent, and shows works to that property rather than the application site. The works to number 22 building were approved as 18/3969/FUL. In the report to that application the officer concluded that the windows to that property were not original, but a subsequent replacement.

8.2 Policy WLP8.39 – Conservation Areas states: *“Proposals for replacement doors, windows and porches in conservation areas where Article 4 Directions are in place must be of a suitable design and constructed in appropriate materials. Applications will be assessed with reference to the prominence of the location, the historic and architectural value of the building and the historic and architectural value of the feature to be replaced”*

- 8.3 Policy WLP8.37 – Historic Environment further directs applicants that *“Proposals should take into account guidance included in the Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document”*
- 8.4 The Supplementary Planning Document "Built Heritage and Design" is a retained document referenced by the current Local Plan adopted 2019, while this document is currently under review, this is in the early stages and there is no suggesting that the overall approach taken by the SPD should be considered out of date.
- 8.5 The windows policy uses a point score to guide officers as to whether replacement should be contemplated. Suffolk Road was at the time of compilation a through route on the one way system and accorded a full three point score. This score might be considered as reduced now that the traffic system has been changed. The officer dealing with the application for the adjacent number 22 did also consider the locational point score could be reduced in her analysis in her delegated report to application reference DC/18/3969/FUL. Even however, if one accords one point only for “location”, the existence of all original windows not demonstrated as in poor order confers a three point score and the condition of the existing building and group which is substantially in its as built form also confers a high 3 point score, giving a total of 7 points.
- 8.6 This indicates a refusal would normally be considered appropriate. The site visit showed that the ground floor timber windows currently in place are in good order in that the joinery is sound with no sign of rot at any point, including the cills, where no softness could be detected. All the windows are to the original pattern (probably also contemporary with the erection of the building) and are architecturally cohesive in appearance.
- 8.7 No condition survey report refuting this view has been provided by the applicant. The applicant has stated that *“First floor window frames are in a poor state and three have cracked panes so these will need replacing in any case”*, this is however a minor matter that would not require planning permission. The applicant notes upper windows are fixed shut to eliminate leakage. There are many products available that can upgrade existing timber sash windows to provide seals such that uncontrolled ventilation can be controlled. The applicant regards the internal aesthetic appearance of the window to be poor. This presumably reflects poor decorative finishes rather than being a critique of the detailing of late Victorian buildings.
- 8.8 Thermal performance could be addressed by insertion of sealed units into the existing frames or the use of secondary glazing.
- 8.9 The current front door is a 20th century design also considered to score 7 points because it is considered to be of a form architecturally appropriate to the building and conservation area character as described at para 2.3 of this report.. The point score again derived from the location (1 point), the quality of the component part which is proposed replaced (3 points) and the cohesive character of the building and its neighbours (3 points).
- 8.10 The composite design represents a serious architectural debasement in form as well as material. Upgrading the existing door with seals routed into the door-leaf could easily offer the necessary thermal performance upgrade. The door to number 24 is considered

to probably be of a slightly later date than that to the adjacent number 22 (where the original door was retained in the approval).

- 8.11 The existing context within the street is one where there have been past losses on material in other properties. There remain however a cluster of properties at the east end of the street, of which NO. 24 is in a part that retain original features. No. 20 has an original shopfront and sash windows above, the property of the corner of Suffolk Road and Battery Green Road has original sash windows and the former library opposite this site on the north side of the road features excellent original fenestration.
- 8.12 The applicant states that the downstairs windows had work to remove rotten wood several years ago and now signs of dilapidation are beginning to occur once again.
- 8.13 At the site visit (30th May 2019) no such dilapidation was noted and the property received grant under the Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme in the early years of this century.
- 8.14 The recommendation for the refusal of this proposal is not inconsistent with the approval for the replacement of windows to the adjacent number 22, because the windows that had existed at that address were not all original and were visibly more deteriorated when examined
- 8.15 The delegated report to DC/18/3969/FUL stated *“the proposed replacement windows could be considered to constitute a visual improvement to the area. The existing windows are in a poor state of repair and they are not original despite them being of a traditional sash form appearance and style and the proposed sash replacements would not have such a significant impact as to raise officer's concerns on the resultant impact on the street scene and urban landscape as a whole”*.
- 8.16 While paragraph 191 of the National Planning Policy Framework says the state of a heritage asset should not inform decision making, the Adopted Supplementary Planning Document does allow economic repair to form part of decision making for window and door replacement. No repair cost quotations have been provided to demonstrate that the windows are beyond economic repair.
- 8.17 On one level the proposal would generate a certain consistency in terms of materials with the neighbour but on the other the retaining where possible of historic features is fundamental to the approach taken by the new Local Plan and East Suffolk Council
- 8.18 There is no doubt that the proposed windows are of a good quality and combined with number 22 would offer congruity. The replacement door however is not considered to offer such a good level of congruity. The policy approach is to retain original fabric.
- 8.19 The applicant mentions the economic benefit of the construction work. Locally sourced craftsmen working in timber are also a valuable resource and so placing work with such businesses helps economic activity and the generation of craft skills.
- 8.9 The applicant has offered to provide photos to illustrate the condition of the windows, but has not offered a report by an expert in the repair of historic windows. If such a report were to be submitted this would carry considerable weight if it demonstrated the windows were beyond repair.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal is contrary to the policy of the Council with regard to retaining historic features and congruity therefore within Conservation Areas.

10 RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 REFUSE permission for the following reason:

The proposal will lead to the replacement of windows that appear to be contemporary with the construction date of the building, and appear externally to be in good order. Furthermore no evidence has been provided by way of a report demonstrating in detail the condition of the windows and door and then proceeding to demonstrate that the windows and door are beyond economic repair and therefore the proposal will conflict with Policy WLP8.39 – Conservation Areas and the Supplementary Design Guidance "Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document" - April 2012

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

See application ref: DC/19/2007/FUL
at www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/public-access
Chris Green, Senior Planning Officer, Riverside, Lowestoft
01502 523022