
MAIN CASE

Proposal: Replace existing first floor windows with timber windows.

Location: 17 - 21 Churchgate Street Soham Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 5DS

Applicant: Mr Peter Audus

Agent: Tony Walton Design

Reference No: 14/00253/FUL

Case Officer: Lorraine Brown

Parish: Soham
Ward: Soham South
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Tony Parramint
Councillor Colin Fordham

Date Received: 7 March 2014 Expiry Date: 2 May 2014

[N273]

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks permission for replacement windows in the first floor of the former grammar school.
- 1.2 This is a resubmission of the previously refused application 13/00494/FUL that was brought to Committee on 22 November 2013.
- 1.3 The main issue to consider in determining this application is the impact of the proposed windows on the character and appearance of an undesignated heritage asset located within Soham Conservation Area. The East Cambridgeshire Design Guide states that where original windows are beyond economical repair, any replacement windows should be of timber construction and the original appearance should be retained.
- 1.4 The application is recommended for approval.
- 1.5 **A Site visit has been arranged for 10.55am, prior to the Planning Committee meeting.**

2.0 THE APPLICATION

2.1 This application seeks permission to install timber, double glazed units in place of the existing unauthorised PVCu units.

3.0 THE APPLICANT'S CASE

3.1 The Applicant's case is set out in the Design, Access, Planning and Heritage Statement, which can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, on the application file.

3.2 In summary, at the time of purchasing the first floor flats, the general condition was very run down and a blight on the streetscene. The applicant has striven to improve the building and its surroundings. Mr Audus has worked with officers following the refusal of the original application in order to secure an acceptable timber alternative that is of an appropriate design and improves the thermal efficiency of the building.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located within the development envelope and the conservation area of Soham and originally formed part of the grammar school. The oldest part of the building is believed to date back to 1686 and the school was closed in 1972. The site is also situated within the town centre of Soham.

4.2 The building is prominent within the street scene and is brick built with a pitched roof and has two stories with projecting gables to the front. Dormer windows have been added to the building at a later date. The upper level of the building has been converted to several flats and the ground floor is divided into a number of units that have consent to be converted into residential use. An area of hardstanding is situated to the front of the building and a parking area to the rear.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 13/00494/FUL Replacement of existing windows - retrospective

6.0 REPLIES TO CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Parish Council – No concerns about the application

7.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009
CS1 Spatial Strategy
EN2 Design

EN5 Historic Conservation

7.2 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Pre-submission version (February 2013)

GROWTH 5 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 2 Design
ENV11 Conservation Areas

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide
Soham Conservation Area

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

7 Requiring good design
12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

8.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

- 8.1 The property was the former grammar school building and is a significant building located within the Conservation Area of Soham. It is prominent in the street scene, set back from the carriageway. It would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset under the NPPF. As such any development should take care to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and not have a detrimental impact. Therefore the main issue to consider in the determination of this application is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.2 The property was previously in use as flats and commercial properties. Consent was granted in 2013 for the conversion of the ground floor commercial units to be converted to residential properties. Flats have limited permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is required for the alteration/replacement of windows and doors. This application seeks to replace the existing unauthorised PVCu windows with timber casement windows.
- 8.3 The previous application was refused by this Committee in November 2013 for the insertion of PVCu windows at the first floor of the property. The property is a significant building and Members determined that the use of PVCu combined with the design and appearance of the windows was not in keeping with the character of the building and the conservation area.
- 8.4 The applicant has since worked with officers in order to secure a more appropriate design for timber windows to replace the unauthorised PVCu windows. The design of the windows proposed is based on photographic evidence of the style of windows that were previously found in the building. The windows are to be casement style windows with top hung openers. The large window on the gable end will be replicated in timber.
- 8.5 Officers have negotiated that the windows to the rear of the property can remain as PVCu as these are not visible in the street scene and will not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.

8.6 In summary, the use of timber, double glazed windows in such a prominent building, will improve the visual appearance of the property and will not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the non-designated heritage asset (the building) or the conservation area.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

- 1 Within 6 months of the date of this decision, the applicant shall submit a schedule for the replacement of the current windows to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved schedule.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 2 No development shall take place until detailed drawings at a scale of 1:20 of the proposed windows have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The window details shall show sections, opening arrangements and glazing bar patterns. Details of the proposed materials and colour finishes shall be included. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 2 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with policies EN2 and EN5 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
Application File 14/00253/FUL	– Lorraine Brown Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Lorraine Brown Conservation Officer 01353 665555 lorraine.king@eastcambs.gov.uk