

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2023/0400
Valid 27/09/2023

TRINITY PARSONAGE,
HARDWICK SQUARE EAST,
BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE,
SK17 6PT

REPLACE WINDOWS WITH
SASH UPVC TO MATCH
EXISTING

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design/impact on the character & appearance of the Conservation Area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is a two-storey detached villa in a residential area of Buxton. The property was refurbished 20 years ago and the new owner seeks to replace 26 of the existing timber windows with high-quality and well designed uPVC sliding sash windows.

The application site is located within the Development Boundary of Buxton. For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the Buxton Central Ward, and it is Hardwick Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to replace 26 existing window frames with vertically sliding sash UPVC units. The applicant acknowledges in the heritage statement that whilst some of the existing timber sash and case windows are not in an overly poor condition, that for energy saving reasons and to save ongoing maintenance UPVC is proposed.



The supplier had provided product details, and the existing and proposed plans show replacement windows that will appear similar in terms of general sash design.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

High Peak Local Plan (Adopted 2016)

S1 Sustainable Development Principles
S1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S2 Settlement Hierarchy
S7 Buxton Sub Area Strategy
EQ6 Design and Place Making
EQ7 – Built and historic environment

Supplementary Planning Document

1. High Peak Design Guide Adopted 2018
2. Residential Design SPD2 Adopted 2005

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Including sections -
12: Achieving well-designed places
16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 23/10/2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 26/10/2023

Public Comments

One representation received approving of the renovation of a property that has been empty for two years.

One representation objecting, stating:

Replacing the original sash windows will result in the loss of the window glass, which unlike modern float glass has ripples & imperfections, which are part of the character of the building.

Existing windows should be repaired with new hardwood sills (where necessary), replacement staff & parting beads & fitting of internal secondary glazing which also would be cheaper & less disruptive to the internal décor.

Installing secondary glazing is a low-risk intervention that can deliver long-term energy and carbon savings. It is also relatively low cost compared to window replacement.

Employ local craftspeople.

Town / Parish Comments

No comments received

High Peak Borough Conservation Officer

Objection - This property though not listed retains a full set of original timber sash single glazed windows which will also have respective cords, weights, pulleys, wheels, glass, fittings and fixtures. Something of which is of rarity in this quantity. All of which mass manufactured plastic UPVC cannot replicate and is not faithful to. Plastic units are not carbon or environmentally friendly and have a limited lifespan, similarly many are unable to be recycled.

Timber windows are capable of repair and historic glass that of crown, blown or float is irreplaceable when lost. I am not confident a thorough investigation has been exhausted before committing to plastic units.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Local Plan policy S2 identifies the Buxton as a 'Market Town' where there is support in principle for a range of developments including housing and employment related proposals. Whilst there are no 'in principle' objections to the application, all other material planning considerations must be satisfied for the scheme to be supported. In this instance the considerations include design, visual impact, neighbour amenity, drainage, and parking provision.

Design & Heritage Issues

Policy EQ6 refers to design and states that all development should be well designed and be of a high quality that responds positively to both its environment and the challenge of climate change, whilst contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place. New development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of the High Peak's townscapes and landscapes. Development is expected to contribute positively to an area's character, history, and identity in terms of scale, height, density, layout, appearance, materials and the relationship to adjacent buildings and landscape features.

The NPPF requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that the design of replacement or new windows needs to relate to the age and style of the property in question as well as to the local context.

The property is characteristic of the conservation area being a large three storey semi-detached villa which is constructed from coursed gritstone with a slate roof and

a two storey stone bay on the front elevation. The property retains a complete set of traditional sliding sash windows which will also have respective cords, weights, pulleys, wheels, glass, fittings and fixtures, something of which is of rarity in this quantity and contributes to the character of the conservation area. Replacement with upvc will be viewed as not preserving or enhancing the heritage asset.

Whilst it is acknowledged that these are in a poor condition, the windows contribute to the character and appearance of the host building and thus to the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. The surveyors report in the assessment of the condition of the windows does not dismiss repair, it doesn't conclude that they are irreparable.

The Surveyors report (Jonathan V. Davies, April 2023) States:

Gutters and rainwater goods etc.

These are of painted cast and require to be overhauled - they are leaking in several places.

Joinery - windows and doors and conservatory.

The barge boards and fascias are painted timber - high level close inspection may reveal areas of decay which can be picked up during a prior-to-painting joinery inspection.

Windows are painted timber single glazed vertical sliding sashes and in good condition although external painting will be required .The cellar windows are plastic double glazed replacements.

The main front door is of timber in good condition although external painting will be required.

There are a number of Velux opening lights to the roof planes which appear to be in good order but not all tested.

Alterations to the building have the potential to harm or sustain and enhance the significance of the Conservation Area. In this case, the proposal would replace numerous existing timber construction windows. The applicant indicates that the design and detailing of the windows would reflect that of the existing timber windows. However, plastic windows do not replicate traditional joinery

The proposed windows, despite being made to replicate wood, would not satisfy in retaining and maintaining the overall aesthetic qualities of the host building, and would not sensitively reflect the defining characteristics of the conservation area, so to cause harm to its character or appearance.

Thus, the proposed windows, despite being made to replicate wood, would not satisfy in retaining and maintaining the overall aesthetic qualities of the host building, and would not sensitively reflect the defining characteristics of the conservation area, so to cause harm to its character or appearance.

The proposed window replacement would not preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would cause harm less than substantial harm to its significance. The NPPF is clear that where any such harm exists, it should be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. It is acknowledged that modern windows would improve the thermal performance of the building thereby providing public benefit in addressing climate change. However, the conservation officer has added further comment to the additional justification provided, stating that mass manufactured plastic windows are not sustainable, have a short life span, do not replicate traditional joinery and are environmentally harmful by way of their chemical compounds, and extensive demand of oil and gases. Many are not recyclable and unable to be repaired. This does not alleviate or satisfy any environmental concerns and in fact contradicts them.

There remains no clear and convincing justification for the proposed irreversible loss of timber sash windows, and the project does not appear to have the long term architectural integrity of this historic building in mind. This substantially contravenes Historic England and SPAB guidance and ignores all merits affording Buxton's survived vernacular to be protected under Conservation Area status. Trinity Parsonage is an excellent example of a well survived Buxton Villa, conscious in design and particularly ornate.

The total loss of original fenestration will have a substantial impact on the architectural value of the property. The existing windows are in remarkable condition for their age, reflecting quality of traditional crafts. Sash cords and weights can be repaired at a negligible price, along with fittings or ironmongery where relevant. Timber frames can be repaired with splice or scarf joints, along with new putty, also satisfying environmental concerns.

The conservation officer considers that sensitive repair should take place, respecting the age and architectural design of the property, sustaining the reasons why this property maintains its desirability to be lived in. Use of secondary glazing is encouraged, it is reversible, it has excellent thermal and sound quality whilst posing no detriment to the character of the building.

The proposed window replacement would not preserve the character and appearance of the Buxton Hardwick Conservation Area and would not comply with policies S7, EQ6 and EQ7 of the High Peak Local Plan 2016 which taken together seek to ensure that development proposals protect the historic environment, contribute to an area's character, and contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment. There would also be conflict with paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states, amongst other things, in determining planning applications account should be taken of sustaining the significance of heritage assets.

The harm to the conservation area would be less than substantial. However, there would be no public benefits to outweigh this harm. Whilst there would be benefits in terms of thermal properties plastic windows are not sustainable, do not replicate traditional joinery and are environmentally harmful by way of their chemical compounds, and use of oil and gases.

Amenity

High Peak Local Plan Policy EQ6 seeks to secure development that does not result in unacceptable effects on the amenity of the area by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

This proposal has no amenity impacts on occupants of surrounding houses.

It is for these reasons the proposed extension will comply with policy EQ6 of the Local Plan.

Nutrient Neutrality

The site lies within the catchment of the River Wye which forms the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Council has been notified that action must be taken to address exceedances of phosphorus in the River. As such, the Council cannot grant consent for development unless it can rule out “likely significant effects” on the SAC. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required when the plan or project creates a source of water pollution or has an impact on water quality and when it is within the catchment of the SAC. Initially, a screening assessment will be required to consider if “likely significant effects” (alone or in-combination) on the SAC can be ruled out. If not, this will be followed by an “Appropriate Assessment” where the impact of the plan or project is considered in detail.

Screening Assessment

The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a European site. The proposal will not increase overnight stays or surface water run-off from the site. Therefore it will not risk having a significant negative effect on the SAC either on its own or in combination with other proposals and therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed works do not fall in line with SPAB and Historic England Guidance and ethics, nor has the character of the property guided proposals. The property is an exemplary building within the conservation area and warrants future listing designation.

The proposed scheme is considered unacceptable in terms of a design and adversely effects on the borough’s heritage assets in terms of harm to the significance of the conservation area but does not give rise to any other planning matters.

Whilst the level of harm would be less than substantial the NPPF states that permission should only be granted if the harm is outweighed by public benefits. The applicant justifies heritage loss in line with being ‘climate conscious’, disregarding

that plastic windows have a large carbon footprint, require a high demand on oil, gases, plastics, are not sustainable in their method of construction, including transportation. They have a limited lifespan and are not sustainable.

The application is therefore considered not to accord with the relevant policies of the High Peak Local Plan (2016) and the NPPF (2023). As such the application is recommended for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL

Case Officer: P. Twigg

Recommendation Date: 19.2.2024

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council