

Report of the Head of Planning

PART 5

Decisions by County Council and Secretary of State, reported for information

- **Item 5.1** – Willow Farm Caravan Park, Hansletts Lane, Ospringe, Faversham, ME13 0RS

A decision based on security management needs arising from the appellant selling off the original dwelling which supervised the caravan park, and in which he had failed to implement or update the advice of the police. As such I consider this to be a poor decision relying too heavily on the appellant's out-of-date evidence, and one in which I consider the Council's concerns have not been given adequate weight.

- **Item 5.2** – 8 Brogdale Road, Faversham, ME13 8SX

A disappointing and strange decision, seemingly based on the fact that the peculiar extension would not be too noticeable, especially to drivers negotiating a sharp double bend nearby.

- **Item 5.3** – Land adjacent to Acorns, Butlers Hill, Dargate, Faversham, ME13 9HG

Full support for the Council's decision.

- **Item 5.4** – 27, Hilton Close, Faversham, ME13 8NN

Support for the Council's decision on streetscene issues, although the Inspector accepted the design as acceptable, which I did not.

- **Item 5.5** – The Faversham Club, Gatefield Lane, Faversham, ME13 8NX

Full support for the Council's decision.

- **Item 5.6** – Site at 9 Ashford Road, Faversham, ME13 8XJ

A very welcome decision which fully supports the Council's decision.

I

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2014

by Clive Tokley MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 June 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/A/14/2212547

The Faversham Club, Gatefield Lane, Faversham, ME13 8NX.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kevin Jordan against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref SW/13/0425, dated 16 February 2013, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2013.
 - The development proposed is the replacement of timber windows with PVC heritage windows to the rear and side elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Faversham Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The CA is focussed on the historic commercial centre of Faversham and extends out to include the surrounding residential streets. The CA contains a wide range of buildings of different ages. My impression was that a very high proportion of the buildings in the vicinity of the Faversham Club have retained their timber windows.
 4. The Club lies just off the shopping area in the town centre and occupies a former chapel that was built in the 1830s. Whilst the building is not listed its handsome well-proportioned front elevation has an arresting appearance in the narrow pedestrian route that links the shops in Preston Street to Newton Road and the residential area beyond. As regards both its history and appearance it is a building of significance within the CA.
 5. The side and rear elevations of the building are not as striking as the front but for the most part they appear to remain as originally built. Whilst they are in need of maintenance and repair the windows in these elevations are important elements in defining the character of the building. Most of the windows on the "right hand" (east) side of the building have large-paned 2 over 2 vertical sliding sashes with slender timber glazing bars and frames. These windows are
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below shallow brick arches and have stone cills. Five windows of the same design and detailing are found on the upper floor of the west side of the building. This elevation also includes five narrower windows on the upper and ground floors and these share the design approach of the larger windows. The principal feature at ground floor level in the west elevation is a wide opening within which are four timber sash windows set within a timber frame with a full-width timber cill. These windows appear to have been a later addition to the building and, whilst they also have slim frames, the sashes and the window opening do not share the detailing of the original windows.

6. The application indicates that all of the windows in the east and west elevations would be replaced and that the proposed windows would be designed to replicate the existing vertical sash windows. A brochure has been submitted indicating typical window designs and I saw a sample of the "Heritage Rose" window at the site visit.
7. The brochure indicates that the proposed windows incorporate "ultra slim" sash and meeting stiles but these would be bulkier than the very slender timber stiles and rails of the existing windows. This would adversely affect the proportions of the larger windows and would have greater effect on the narrow windows where the frame occupies a proportionately greater area of the opening. The reflective quality and texture of uPVC differs from that of painted timber and I consider that the proposed windows would be distinguishable from the original timber windows.
8. There are no drawings showing how the proposed windows would sit within the window reveals and there is no indication of how the large opening in the west elevation would be treated. I therefore have limited information to enable me to consider the full effect of the proposal on the building and the CA. Nevertheless I consider that as regards the proportions of their structural elements and their surface texture and appearance the proposed windows would not reflect the original character of the building and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA.
9. The appellant draws attention to the use of non-timber windows nearby in the CA; however the examples referred to do not relate to the replacement of original windows. I have noted the examples of uPVC windows in the brochure submitted by the appellant and the references to the use of uPVC elsewhere. However none of these convince me that the windows as proposed here would be acceptable.
10. Although located in a quiet pedestrian route I consider that the appeal property makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. The flank walls may not be prominently in view but they are seen from public and semi-public areas and the side windows are an important element in the historic integrity of the building. The design and appearance of the windows in the appeal building reflects the prevailing character of the vertical sliding timber sash windows within the CA and I consider that their replacement as proposed would detract from the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies E1, E15 and E19 of Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 which seek to ensure that proposals respond positively to the distinctive characteristics of their surroundings and preserve or

enhance the features that contribute to the special character and appearance of conservation areas.

11. In my view the harm caused to the CA by the proposal would be "less than substantial" as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework. I have noted the benefits of the uPVC windows as regards insulation but the thermal performance of the building could be improved without the harm arising from the proposal. The appellant also draws attention to the reduced maintenance requirements of the proposal as compared with timber windows but I consider that neither this nor the improved insulation would represent public benefits that would outweigh the harm to the CA.

Conclusions

12. I have concluded that the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Faversham Conservation Area. I have not identified any benefits that would outweigh the harm arising from the proposal and therefore, taking account of all matters, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Clive Tokley

INSPECTOR