
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2017

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 24 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/W/17/3169745

1 Regis House, Richmond Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1BU

- 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 Mrs Rosilene Rodrigues against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref BR/292/16/PL, dated 27 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is to replace all windows in the flat.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed in part and dismissed in part.
2. Planning permission is granted for replacement of windows on the north east elevation in accordance with the application ref BR/292/16/PL, dated 27 October 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) Before any development begins, details of the head, sill, mullions, jambs and glazing of the replacement windows on the north east elevation at a scale of not less than 1:20 shall be submitted to the local planning authority and approved in writing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings.
3. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to windows on the north west and south east elevations.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the proposed replacement windows would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bognor Regis (Railway Station) Conservation Area; and the effect of the replacement windows on the setting of Bognor Regis railway station, which is listed at Grade II.

Reasons

5. The appeal building is a modest former warehouse adjacent to the main entrance to Bognor Regis Railway Station, built in 1902. Together with the 1886 Picturedrome and the 1911 Reynolds Repository opposite, the station and buildings adjacent to it make an attractive group representing a particular phase of development of the town on the approach to the town centre. The existing timber windows are in a poor state of repair but remain similar in appearance and design.
-

They are of fairly simple construction and complement the utilitarian architectural style of the building.

6. Flat 1 is on the first floor and has windows facing north west into the courtyard in front of the station, south east into Richmond Road and north east across the glazed canopy of the station. UPVC windows are thicker in frame and section than the existing windows and this would be particularly apparent when the windows are open. Moreover the appearance of the double glazed units would be very different to single glazing, or single glazing plus secondary glazing. The heritage significance of the existing building relies on its utilitarian history and former functional relationship with the adjacent station. Replacement of the windows facing south east would obviously contrast with all the other windows in this elevation, which appear to be original. Replacement of the windows in the north west elevation, although these are partially hidden, would contrast with the remaining timber windows on the second floor. I noted at the site visit that UPVC windows have been installed in the first floor Flat 3 facing the station forecourt and understand that this has been done without approval. These serve to demonstrate the difficulties that can be caused when heavy UPVC replaces the more delicate original painted timber sections.
7. I have taken into account the new residential block on the opposite side of Richmond Road which has a large number of UPVC windows. This block lies outside the conservation area and does not seriously impinge on the setting of the listed building.
8. The difficulties associated with replacement of original windows with matching facsimiles are understood, but once lost, heritage significance is very difficult to replace. The use of contemporary materials for replacement windows such as the Residence 9 type cannot be ruled out, but no drawings have been provided of the proposed elevations, sections or glazing. Without these, it would be impossible to have any assurance that the new windows would be sufficiently sympathetic. The replacement of windows on the south east and north west elevations with UPVC would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bognor Regis (Railway Station) Conservation Area and would diminish the setting of the listed building, conflicting with the heritage protection aims of policies GEN7 and AREA 2 of the Arun District Local Plan, policy 2 of the Bognor Regis 2015-2030 Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 and the relevant aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. However the windows facing north east are very difficult to see. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Conservation Areas published in 2000 provides helpful advice despite its age. It advises that permission will not normally be granted for replacement of traditional timber windows 'where visible'. The windows on the north eastern elevation are to all practical purposes, invisible from the public domain. Subject to conditions requiring details of the replacements, UPVC in this situation would not conflict with the policies above. I have imposed conditions requiring details of the replacement windows in order to ensure that they replicate as far as possible the existing sections and glazed areas.
10. I conclude that for all the above reasons, the appeal should be dismissed in part and allowed in part.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR