

From: Martyn White
Sent: 26 May 2022 18:12:24
To: Harry Chalk
Cc:
Subject: LU/93/22/PL

LU/93/22/PL

Replacement of 43 No. existing timber windows with new double glazed PVCu windows.

Nightingale Nursing Home 43 Beach Road Littlehampton BN17 5JG

This building has been identified by the LPA as a Locally Listed Building or Structure of Character, and it is also located within a Locally Listed Area of Character. Both the Locally Listed Building or Structure of Character, and the Locally Listed Area of Character are considered as Non-designated Heritage Assets in accordance with the NPPF. I note that a heritage statement has not been submitted as part of the application in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. This is disappointing as it is not clear if any form of heritage assessment has been undertaken by the applicant when preparing this application. Neither is any information provided regarding the current condition of the windows. However, I provide the following comments:

This area is characterised by large, mostly Edwardian, detached and semi-detached properties. These properties are substantial and grand in design with decorative barge boards, porches and balconies, and are principally 2 ½ and 2 storeys. Caffyn’s Field is one of two attractive open spaces with St Catherine’s Church forming an imposing focal point at the southern end of the open space, and the War Memorial a focus for the northern end.

The nursing home is located on the corner of Maltravers Road and Beach Road and is visible in the street-scene. It forms a key part of the entrance to the character area when travelling from the town centre and is also close to the war memorial. Both visible elevations of the building contain a large number of timber windows, especially the northern one. The simple design of the building along with a limited palate of materials, means that the windows form a key element of its appearance. The simple design of the windows seems to be appropriate for the age of the building and therefore are of note.

There are a variety of building materials used within this area of character, principally brick, flint and Purbeck stone and plain clay tiles and slate for the roofs. Whilst the Area of character description statement identifies that fenestration in the area is largely vertically sliding sashes, with very few having been replaced with UPVC, this is acknowledged as no longer being the case as a number of buildings now have replacement windows. However, as a result more opportunities should be sought to retain those that remain. This is partly so as to help retain character, but also to aid future reinstatement of more appropriate windows.

The proposal

The Proposal is to replace 43 existing timber windows with UPVC ones. These windows are mainly located on the two elevations which are visible form the surrounding roads. Windows are an important part of a building’s history and can be invaluable to our understanding of historic properties. They can tell us not only of changing architectural taste but social hierarchy, building economics, technical advances and social history through taxation of windows and building materials. Above all, windows are a key part of the architectural composition of a building, and help to establish the character of a house or building and sometimes a whole area.

In recent years there has been a rash of unsympathetic window replacements in historic buildings with modern materials and mass produced windows in UPVC. UPVC is not a traditional, vernacular material and is unsuitable for use in historic buildings. Such windows are often crudely detailed, and the size of frame is usually much larger than that of a traditional window, giving them an obtrusive, ‘chunky’ appearance. The shiny finish of uPVC is also out of keeping with traditional materials. I should also point out that UPVC windows are also unsustainable; it is tricky to repair them, with often the only viable option being to replace them in their entirety. In addition, they require continuous cleaning to prevent discolouration from dirt and ultraviolet light, and regular maintenance.

Imitation sash windows, such as those proposed here, which consist of top-hung hinged sections, are also unacceptable, as they do not properly reflect the traditional design of the windows already present in the building, especially the older part.

Conclusion PL LU/93/22/PL

The proposed design and materials of the proposed replacement windows are not appropriate for the building and will detract from the character of the area. Whilst it is acknowledged that a number of other buildings have already replaced some or all of their windows with UPVC ones, it is suggested that there is the opportunity to retain an important feature within this building.

There, the proposal is considered to be problematic and cannot be supported from a historic environment perspective. As a result, you will need to consider these comments, along with paragraph 203 of the NPPF and the relevant policies in the Arun Local Plan 2018 (namely HER SP1, HER DM2 and HER DM4).

Martyn White
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Please note: I work on Conservation for half of the working week (all day Monday and Friday and Tuesday Afternoons)

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