

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No: 200949/FUL

Address: Flat 3, Seafield Court, Russell Street, Reading

Proposal: Replacement of existing timber windows to front, side and rear elevation of flat 3 located in the first floor of the building with new matching double glazing upvc windows

Case officer: Julie Williams

Site Description and Surrounding Area: The site comprises a detached three storey building serving flats located on the eastern side of Russell Street. The rear of the property is covered with hardstanding and used for parking accessed from Baker Street. The surrounding area is characterised as predominantly residential, consisting of two and three-storey terraced properties. The building to the south of the site is Listed, as are the buildings immediately opposite on the eastern side of this part of Russell Street. It is in the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area and an air quality management area.

Proposal: This is an application to replace the seven existing windows with new ones. The proposal would result in existing timber framed windows to front and rear being replaced with upvc ones in the same design.



Living Room	
Quantity	2
Product	uPVC Vertical Slider Window *
Frame style	Contemporary
Frame Colour	White/White
Frame	135mm Multi-Chamber System
Hangings	Down (Plant-on horns) Up
Glazing specification	(Vertical Sliding) Glazing: Optiwhite E glass externally and soft coated K Glass internally – Bottom Pane Toughened



Plans Considered:

Location and Site Plan

Existing elevations

Proposed elevations Drawing No2 RO.1 dated 5 July 2020

Photos indicating windows to be changed - as shown below for front elevation



Specifications from window company Britelite Specification dated 5 July 2020

Additional information provided by applicant:

Seafield Court originally consisted of 6 flats over 3 floors and an additional basement space which has recently been converted into 2 flats for a total of 8 flats. Out of the 8 flats 6 have already had the windows replaced with double glasses UPVC; additionally the communal windows and external front and rear doors have also been replaced in the last couple of years. In the photos below I have highlighted in yellow the windows for my property and in red the windows to the only other flat that has not had these replaced.

As indicated in the planning application information, the proposed windows will match the existing ones; and the reasons for replacing the windows are that are in very bad condition (i.e. the wood is rotten, they do not work properly, pieces of glass are broken) and furthermore they are extremely energy inefficient which is making the property very difficult to let as most tenants nowadays only look at properties that are energy efficient. I believe the new windows will significantly improve the overall building appearance while keeping the current appearance and character of the building.



Relevant Planning History:

171221 Conversion of a disused basement storage area in to two new residential units.
Permitted

150358 Re-building of structurally unsafe front boundary wall including a new front gate, replacement of front door to flats, and re-surfacing of rear parking area. Permitted

Consultation Responses:

Conservation and Urban Design Officer:

I think if it is modern, and the rest of the windows are now mostly UPVC, there is not point objecting. It would not hold up in an appeal.

A site notice was displayed on 9th Sept 2020 and no neighbour letters of representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The applicant received an apology for the delay in determining this application but it was noted that on reassigning the application that a notice had not been placed in the local paper as required and the local conservation area advisory committee not consulted. The regulations for public consultation on applications where the development would affect the character or appearance of a conservation area are set out in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004. Paragraph 5A applies and requires the local planning authority to publish details in a local newspaper and on a notice displayed on site for not less than 7 days.

There was also no heritage statement submitted, which should have been a part 2 validation requirement. Whilst it might be possible to waive the heritage statement it is not possible to ignore the statutory requirement to place a notice in the local paper or to ignore our normal process for dealing with applications in a conservation area. This has been explained to the applicant and an extension of time was agreed on the application until 10 June 2021.

No pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)

Appraisal

The main issues are:

Design, Impact on Character of Area, Street Scene and Conservation Area

It is relevant that the application site is a relatively modern appearing block of flats although materials used when built tried to replicate those used on adjacent older buildings with red brick and timber windows but in terms of their appearance are clearly modern.

Timber windows would be preferable to the uPVC windows proposed. However, many of the existing windows to the main building are now uPVC and based on the specifications provided by the applicant the external changes to the building would be minimal and would not adversely harm the character of the building or the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed replacement windows as shown on the specification and in the context of other changes to windows on the block would not look out of keeping in terms of design and would not harm adjacent heritage assets or the character and appearance of the building and the conservation area.

As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies CC7, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT subject to conditions and informatives

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission was granted.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. This permission relates only to the following plans and drawings:

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.

3. The windows used shall be as specified on the approved drawings only.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring that the new development appears in keeping with the character of the existing building.