Expiry Date - 29/11/2024

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1614/23 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Flat 5 Hastings Court Winchelsea Gardens Worthing

Proposal: Replacement white UPVC windows to East and West elevations

Date of site visit: Observed from the street scene on 25/03/2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to 'Hastings Court' which is a mid-20th century three-storey block of flats located to the south-easterly side of Winchelsea Gardens and Hastings Road. Hastings Court, along with the other blocks of flats that radiate from Marine Gardens (Romney Court & Winchelsea Gardens), are located within Marine Gardens Conservation Area, which was formally adopted by the Council 25th July 2024 following a period of consultation.

The three aforementioned blocks are described within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) as (non-exhaustive):

'…subtly different, but consistent in their scale, massing and materials, and were all designed by the same (unknown) architect and built between 1931 and 1937. Hastings and Romney Courts are three storeys in height with flat roofs and are located at the east and west ends of Marine Gardens where the long low buildings form a gentle arc around the southern part of the curved road (Winchelsea Gardens). Both Hastings and Romney Courts extend along Hastings and Romney Road with an angled wing in a northeast and northwest direction respectively. Hastings is the larger of the two buildings, the southern part of which extends further south than Romney to the west.

… The architectural detailing of the buildings is high quality. The buildings are three storeys in height and the horizontal emphasis of wide continuous brick bands is relieved by a rhythm of projecting bays, which return to the recessed block with a series of pleasing curved balconies. Within each of the projecting bays further relief is provided by contrasting solid and void elements provided by stacked recessed balconies.'

The CACA also makes reference to the windows of the buildings:

'*There have been alterations and losses to these three buildings which compromise their architectural integrity. Most obviously, all the original crittal windows have been replaced with uPVC which drastically diminishes the*

striking 'Deco' appearance of the buildings, particularly where on curved parts of the buildings such as the stair towers. A number of the recessed balconies have also been enclosed which considerably alters the intended aesthetic of contrasting areas of solid wall and voids.'

Flat No. 5 is located to the ground-floor of the building. The subject of this application are 2No windows to front of the building serving the living room and a bedroom and 2No windows to the rear of the building serving a bathroom and another bedroom. Permission is sought for the replacement of the existing white UPVC units with new white UPVC units.

Hastings Court is not a statutory listed building but is recognised by the Council as a local interest building.

Relevant Planning History:

Planning permission granted at the application property for 'enclosure of existing front and rear balconies with white upvc windows and doors' under 94/05859/FULL, decision issued 25 May 1994.

Applications for replacement windows achieved at many flats on the block:

- 15 Hastings Court - Replacement windows from aluminium to UPVC to first floor flat under AWDM/0812/21, decision issued 09 Aug 2021.
- 12A Hastings Court - Replacement of timber and aluminium windows and balcony doors with aluminium under AWDM/0240/21, decision issued 19 Apr 2021.
- 10 Hastings Court - Retention of white UPVC windows to first floor (retrospective) under AWDM/0684/20, decision issued 26 Jun 2020.
- 6 Hastings Court - Replace existing aluminium windows with similar uPVC windows on ground floor to front (west) elevation under AWDM/1180/15, decision issued 07 Oct 2015.
- 4 Hastings Court - Replace three aluminium framed windows with Upvc windows to rear (east) elevation and two to front (west) elevation under AWDM/0778/15, decision issued 26 Aug 2015.
- 21 Hastings Court - Installation of replacement pvcu windows and conservatory on rear balcony under 97/05985/FULL, decision issued 15 Dec 1997.

Approvals for properties within the building to enclose the balconies and/ or construct a lean-to conservatory comprising plastic white frames: No. 15 (98/00700/FULL), No. 24 (96/05892/FULL), No. 16 (96/05890/FULL), No. 7 (96/05893/FULL), No. 22 (95/05874/FULL & 95/05873/FULL), No. 8 (95/05876/FULL), No. 4 (95/05875/FULL), No. 14 (WB/1085/72), No. 10 (WB/0616/70).

Consultations: None.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (Revised December 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)
Marine Gardens Conservation Area Appraisal 2024

Worthing Local Plan (2023) 2020-2036
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM24 (The Historic Environment)

Planning Assessment

There is no objection in principle to extensions and alterations to residential dwellings within the built-up area. The key considerations are the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the locality, and the effects on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Visual Amenity and Heritage

The inclusion of Hasting Court (and the other buildings) in the Conservation Area recognises their distinctive architectural quality, which remains of interest albeit diluted by the alterations that that have taken place. Since the Conservation Area has been formally adopted, the Council has a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

The Conservation Areas Appraisal sets out an aspiration for the original character of these buildings to be restored, stating: '*residents and management companies are encouraged to explore options to install historically accurate replicas of the original steel framed windows at Hastings, Winchelsea and Romney Courts*'. That said, it would be difficult to justify refusing UPVC windows in principle here, since none of the original Crittall windows remain in situ, and UPVC units predominate throughout, including Flat No. 5.

The submitted drawings demonstrate that the proposed replacement UPVC windows would have thicker framing than the existing units, and would consequently result in a 'heavier' appearance than the existing windows. Whilst this is disappointing, it is evident that replacement UPVC windows with similarly thick framing have been installed elsewhere in this building with planning permission, including the adjacent ground-floor flat (albeit this was prior to the adoption of the Conservation Area).

Following discussions with the agent it was agreed to omit the originally proposed unsightly trickle vents which would have further detracted from the appearance of the windows. On balance, given the particular circumstances

of this building where none of the original windows remain, it is considered the existing appearance of the building or the character of the conservation area would be materially worsened as a result of the proposed windows.

Residential Amenity

There would be no material planning issues in relation to residential amenity as the development by virtue of its minor and like-for-like nature insofar as scale of development is concerned would have no impact on the living conditions of surrounding neighbours.

Other

Whilst highly debatable to claim UPVC is a sustainable material, some weight may be given to the improved thermal efficiency that would result from installing replacement windows, and the sustainability benefits that will accrue from the associated reduced demand for energy.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard Time Limit
3. Window Detail

Informatives

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Jason Albon Date: 28.11.2024

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 28.11.2024