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Grounds of Appeal

On behalf of

Mr & Mrs McLean

Proposed replacement uPVC windows

Planning ref – 15/00397/APP

Date of refusal – 29 April 2015

Property History & Introduction

The following statement is to be read in conjunction with our appeal against the ***refusal of replacement windows at 7 Blantyre Place, Portknockie***. The proposals are to replace the existing timber windows with new uPVC windows.

The Planning Department has rejected our application to replace the existing timber windows on the grounds that the proposed materials will adversely affect the property and the surrounding conservation area.

The client's property is a two-storey detached house and is an unlisted building within the Portknockie Village Conservation Area.

The property already has timber windows installed, however they are inefficient and unsightly as a large proportion of the glazing units have now failed, leading to significant heat loss. A more sustainable and cost effective solution is required.

The selection of the window style and colour is based on an assessment of the building and its character and also in order to remedy existing problems with the current windows and frames. While introducing additional safety features as required by legislation, we are seeking to closely match the colour and proportions in order to maintain the appearance of the property.

Grounds of Appeal

The main reason for the refusal of the application is for the use of uPVC. There are numerous mentions throughout the report of uPVC being inappropriate for the property and the area. However there are numerous examples of uPVC replacement windows in the street. Photos of these are below

Examples of uPVC windows in the area







We appreciate that as a window framing material, timber can have a certain presence and appeal if specified correctly. However, timber windows are much more expensive than uPVC options, are not draught proof and do not perform as well as uPVC under the current U-value or WER (Window Energy Ratings) system. Furthermore, adding double-glazing to timber frames will result in a price increase of around 200% when compared with a uPVC product of the same proportions.

Mr & Mrs McLean's decision to choose uPVC was a holistic approach taking into account:

- Sustainability
- Current & future energy costs
- Desire to maintain a traditional appearance
- Actual window performance - U Value
- Cost of ongoing maintenance
- Practicality of cleaning

We appreciate that there are various uPVC window designs that would be inappropriate for this property and may therefore have created a negative attitude towards uPVC. However, the frames that we have chosen are suitable for this area.

Another positive aspect of uPVC is its contribution to sustainable development. The environment no longer has to deal with the effects of heavy metal (lead, barium, cadmium) which were once component factors in the production of uPVC. In our case this ceased in 2005. Our factory in Cowdenbeath has been recycling uPVC for the past 12 years, by sending all our uPVC off-cuts back to our supplier (*LB Plastics*) for recycling. In doing so, we are adhering to the voluntary European Vinyl 2010 Charter, and can ensure that disposal is carried out with total environmental efficiency. Furthermore, the traditional aluminium and steel reinforcement has now been almost completely replaced with recycled co-extruded cellular materials, made from our original waste.

Our virgin uPVC is as easily recycled since it is free from lead, cadmium and barium, all of which are hazardous to human health. In fact, uPVC was chosen as a material that could contribute to sustainable development in the 'passive house' concept*. Here it was used in a variety of applications such as roofing, covering sheets, insulating membranes, resilient flooring, gutters, windows and roller shutters, cables, pipes and greenhouses.

** The Passivhouse project is a by-product of the Passivhaus standard for energy efficiency in buildings, aka (Passivhaus in German)*

The replacement windows (if accepted) within the client's property will have a minimum life expectancy of 60 years maintenance free, as opposed to timber windows which would have to be sanded down and repainted every 3-5 years (approximate estimation). Timber is also more troublesome when it comes to recycling at end of use, especially when you consider that frames can be contaminated with a vast range of preservatives, fillers, cements, paints and solvents. Additionally, according to CIRIA, 62% of timber from demolition sources goes straight to landfill (*Taken from 'Window of Opportunity' report, published by WWF-UK*).

We believe the proposed replacements are far superior to the previously existing units from a maintenance and energy consumption point of view. Of course, uPVC does not have the same qualities as timber with respect to CO₂ absorption, however the life span of these windows is such that they do not have to be maintained or recycled within short periods of time, unlike timber.

Advances in uPVC window construction have allowed CR Smith to be able to fabricate windows with a centre pane U-Value of 0.8W/m². This will be essential to any zero or low carbon home and is another great example of progress made to the overall efficiency of uPVC as a material. I have attached the LB Plastics 'Sheerframe' - *Guide to Sustainable Windows, Doors & Conservatories* - for your assessment, which states that:

- PVC frames can be easily collected and recycled. Both the end life and manufacturing process waste materials are routinely recycled to eradicate any unnecessary waste.
- The frame material is 100% recyclable.
- Average of 50 years or more durability over timber.

- PVC windows are amongst the most rigorously tested and approved of all construction products, unlike some self-governing approval schemes run by the timber industry. With reference to our products, we currently have certification from BBA, BSI and ISO 14001.
- Co-extruded weather-seals ensure maximum air and water tightness and prevent heat being lost easily through draughts. This is one of the most underrated measures of energy efficiency, but one of the most important to any developer.
- Aluminium reinforcement within the frames is insulated using thermoplastic compound, thus improving the thermal efficiency of the uPVC window further.
- In non-structural areas (*e.g. sash & case*) the reinforcement is made from 100%-recycled material. This also applies to the windows used in the client's property.
- LB Plastics 'Sheerframe' windows were the first UK extruded PVC windows to become heavy metal (lead-free), with the use of lead additives phased out as a precautionary measure and replaced with calcium organic stabilisers.

The proposed replacements are designed to be superior to the existing timber units in terms of their safety, security maintenance and energy consumption. Again, we would also ask that the Local Review Body take into account of the poor condition of the existing units and the effect on the building and its users.

Conclusion

The Planning Department has refused our application on the basis that our uPVC windows would degrade the conservation area. However there are numerous examples of lower quality uPVC replacements throughout the area, which we feel have already compromised the character of the conservation area.

We believe our proposed replacements not only complement the general aesthetics of the building and will not compromise the character of the building in any way, but they also provide a more sustainable and environmentally friendly option taking account of the condition and performance of the existing window units.

We therefore seek to appeal the decision of the Planning Department.