



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2025

by **K Mansell BA (Hons) MPhil TP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T4210/D/25/3374183

Hope House, 177 Bolton Street, Ramsbottom BL0 9JD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Husband against the decision of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 72009.
 - The development proposed is proposed replacement windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character or appearance of the Ramsbottom Conservation Area (RCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property at Hope House is a substantial detached three-storey Victorian-era residential villa. Its principal elevation fronting Bolton Street features a front gable detailed with ornate timber barge boards and double-height bay windows, which flank a decorative entrance porch. The property is constructed in stone with a slate roof and timber windows throughout. These mainly comprise traditional sliding sash windows with the exception of 3 casement windows to the rear. The surrounding area is primarily residential in character. Whilst the architectural style of dwellings within the wider area is somewhat varied, many properties immediately surrounding Hope House are of a similar period. The appeal scheme would replace all the existing timber windows in Hope House with double glazed uPVC units. These would be heritage type 'legacy' frames.
4. Hope House lies within the RCA where s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The boundary of the RCA as a whole extends to a reasonably large area, incorporating Ramsbottom Town Centre to the west of the appeal property and surrounding streets and spaces. From the information before me and my observations on site, it is the concentration of 19th-century buildings and the traditional architectural vernacular, including the use of natural materials such as stone, slate and timber, as well as decorative elements to elevations and the form and detail of fenestration treatment, that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the RCA as a whole, and thus its special interest and significance.

5. I acknowledge that the proposed replacement uPVC sash units would reflect the sash format and glazing styles of the existing windows. The appeal scheme would similarly provide casement replacements to the three rear openings. The heritage-style profiles would also offer a reasonably slimline appearance, and the inclusion of run-through horns where present on the existing sash windows would imitate an existing detail. However, whilst the building is not listed nor within the setting of any listed buildings, the use of uPVC would not fully replicate the appearance of timber framed windows. Even with a white grained finish, compared to wood, uPVC typically has a more uniform appearance. It would also introduce contemporary materials into what is presently a largely intact historic property in terms of window form and detailing. The appeal scheme would consequently appear as a modern insertion and it would be sufficiently noticeable from the public realm to constitute harm to the character and appearance of the building and, therefore, to the RCA.
6. Furthermore, the appeal scheme would remove part of the traditional fabric of the building and consequently, it would not represent a truly like for like replacement. I also have no substantive evidence before me, in terms of large-scale plans or sections of the existing windows to confirm that the replacement windows would entirely replicate the frame depth and proportions of the current fenestration. The introduction of uPVC windows would consequently detrimentally alter the appearance of Brook House and fail to make a positive contribution to the RCA.
7. The appellant has referred to similar heritage-style uPVC sash windows being permitted within other CAs across the UK, including Bath, York, Oxford and Greater Manchester, as well as a specific planning appeal decision in Bedford¹ where the Inspector observed that conservation-style uPVC sash windows in that case would, from normal viewing distances, be difficult to distinguish from traditional timber sash windows. However, I have not been provided with the appeal decision in full, nor to any specific examples elsewhere, so I cannot be certain as to the detailed considerations that applied in those cases. I attach limited weight to them as a result. In any event, I am required to reach conclusions based on the individual circumstances and merits of this appeal and its impact on the immediate locality, which cannot be directly comparable.
8. The appellant has also drawn my attention to the presence of uPVC windows in a number of nearby properties, and I observed several of these during my site visit. Nonetheless, I have not been provided with any details of the planning permissions or circumstances relating to those installations. I therefore cannot be certain what they replaced or what considerations applied in those cases. I also saw that some of these modern interventions confirmed that such alterations are detrimental to the character and appearance of the CA. My assessment must also relate solely to the proposal before me.
9. For these reasons, I consider that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the RCA. Given its modest scale, in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm to the significance of the RCA as a whole would be less than substantial. However, having regard to Paragraph 215 of the Framework, such harm should then be weighed against the public benefits of the appeal scheme, including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.

¹ APP/K0235/D/23/3318897

10. I am mindful of the appellant's assertion that the existing windows pose safety concerns and uPVC windows would be more thermally efficient than timber, reduce condensation and support the building's longevity. However, I have no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the existing windows are unsafe, nor that uPVC fenestration would noticeably outperform well installed and maintained timber windows that would also secure the building's future. I also have nothing before me to demonstrate that timber windows would not satisfy building regulation requirements. I attribute very limited weight to these potential benefits as a result.
11. On my site visit I did observe the condition of some of the existing windows, including peeling paintwork, but again, I have no substantive evidence that they are all beyond repair. Whilst uPVC may offer a lower maintenance solution in comparison to wood, this would be a private benefit rather than a public one. I am also mindful that paragraphs 212 and 213 of the Framework advise that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm to its significance should require clear and convincing justification. When taken together, the very limited public benefits that I have identified would not amount to that and consequently, they would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the RCA that I have identified.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the RCA, which, it follows, would not be preserved or enhanced. Accordingly, it would be contrary to policies EN2/1 and EN2/2 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997). These policies require, amongst other matters, that development proposals preserve or enhance the character and significance of conservation areas, including through consideration of design and materials.

Conclusion

13. The appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations that would indicate a decision otherwise would be appropriate. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K. Mansell

INSPECTOR