

Date of Meeting	14 th October 2010
Application Number	E/10/0886/LBC
Site Address	25 Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1NN
Proposal	Application of textured masonry paint to the exterior of the property.
Applicant	Mr I. Wixon
Town/Parish Council	DEVIZES
Grid Ref	400597E 161151N
Type of application	Listed Building Consent
Case Officer	Pippa Card

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been brought to committee at the request of Councillor Jeff Ody.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation that the application be refused.

2. Report Summary

The main issues to consider are:

- The impact of the proposal on the listed building
- The impact of the proposal on the streetscene and neighbouring properties
- The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3. Site Description

The application relates to No.25 Long Street which is a Grade II listed dwelling located towards the southern edge of the historic town centre. One of a terrace of early 19th century houses with rendered elevations and slate roofs, No.25 is located on the corner with Bridewell Street and the property also incorporates part of the first house within a separate terrace of largely unpainted brick buildings fronting onto Bridewell Street. The corner location and extent of the property mean that it has a considerable length of frontage onto both Long Street and Bridewell Street. The property is located within the Devizes Conservation area and occupies a prominent corner location on a key approach to the town centre.



4. Relevant Planning History

K/59301/LBC – Approve with Conditions 23/09/2008.

Replace lintel (timber) over front door/window with 2. RSJs. Hack off rendering to external walls and replace with lime mortar.

5. The Proposal

To retain the currently unauthorised elevation treatment of textured paint to the Long Street and Bridewell Street elevations of the listed building.

6. Planning Policy

Government guidance contained in PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment and the accompanying “Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide” are relevant to the consideration of this application for listed building consent. Policy HE9 sets policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets. HE10 refers to the consideration of applications affecting the setting of designated heritage assets.

7. Consultations

Devizes Town Council has raised no objections to the proposal.

8. Publicity

The application has been advertised with a press and site notice.

Three letters of support have been received, which can be summarised as follows:

- The colour improves the general streetscene and contrasts well with the adjacent listed properties although I appreciate colours are subjective.
- There is nothing out of keeping with the street as a whole in a house painted blue and the colour does not detract from the character of the property or the area around it.
- That the above colour is considered to blend in well with the rest of the street’s character.

9. Planning Considerations

Background

Listed building consent was granted in 2008 to the current applicant for various remedial works including the removal and replacement of the then existing cement roughcast render with a lime render and repainting in “cream breathable paint”. These elements of the consent, however, were not implemented. In June 2010 the masonry elevations of the property were painted in a strong blue colour using a standard textured masonry paint. Where a significant change in external colour scheme is proposed, listed building consent is required. However, consent was not sought prior to the works being carried out and the current application represents a retrospective application for consent to retain the paint scheme already implemented.

Assessment

Government policy contained in PPS5 sets out the presumption to be made in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets (including listed buildings and conservation areas and requires that any harm to the significance of a heritage asset or its setting should be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposal (Policies HE9 & 10). The main impacts of the works are upon the historic character and appearance of the listed host building; on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings; and on the wider street scene and conservation area.

Whilst the use of standard textured masonry paint cannot be considered to be ideal, the property has previously been rendered in rough-cast cement render and over-painted in masonry paint and there is no objection to repeating this from the point of view of any impact on the fabric of the building. However, there is no historic precedent within the area for the painting of exterior masonry in vibrant colours such as this. The rendered and stuccoed elevations applied to many earlier buildings within the town during the Georgian period were seen as a cost effective imitation of the fashionable and high status Bath stone facades of the period and were coloured accordingly in creams and beiges to replicate the soft colour of natural limestone. Elsewhere

within the wider area, there is limited evidence of the use of colourwash and the pervading colours of the towns and villages are the broken and off-whites of self-coloured limewash.

In recent years Long Street specifically has seen the introduction of a more varied colour palette and the Devizes Conservation Area Statement notes that “The rendered buildings show an attractive use of colour with an obvious recognition of the effect on the street scene. Colour is often dismissed as simply a matter of taste but in Long Street care has clearly been taken to ensure variety and compatibility”. To date, this compatibility has been ensured by the use of less assertive pastels and dark earthy tones. On a number of occasions where more strident tones have been suggested these have either been toned down during negotiation or, where implemented without consent, enforcement action has been authorised by the Council’s elected members (with actions being upheld at appeal) and the use of more compatible colours secured.

Had an application been submitted for painting in this colour prior to the works being submitted, attempts would have been made to negotiate the use of a less vibrant tone. It is unlikely that an objection would have been made to the use of any less assertive pastel shade - whether blue or another colour – although it should be noted that blue is rarely found as an exterior masonry colour historically, with stronger blues in particular relying on the use of extremely expensive imported pigments such as lapis lazuli and indigo which, where available at all, would have been reserved for use on high status interiors.

It has been suggested that the existing blue paint will “fade” with time – however, it should be noted that, unlike the naturally occurring pigments used in historic paints, those used in modern masonry paints are specifically formulated to be resistant to colour change and there is unlikely to be any significant change during the lifetime of the paint.

10. Conclusion

It is considered that the painting of the dwelling in the chosen colour conflicts with policy HE9 of PPS5. Taking into account the prominent and extensive building frontage involved, which wraps around the corner and incorporates historically separate entities within two streets, it is considered that the use of this vibrant and assertive paint colour which has no historic precedent within the area has had a detrimental impact on the historic character of the protected building. The painted elevations constitute a discordant feature which detracts from the setting of nearby listed buildings and the wider street scene. If approved, the change will create a precedent for the use of vibrant tones elsewhere within the street and town which, cumulatively, have the potential for a significant impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The wider public benefit which results from the continuing maintenance of the property could equally have been achieved in a way which minimised visual impact by the choice of an alternative, more appropriate, colour and cannot be considered to justify the works which have been carried out.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse listed building consent for the following reasons:

- 1 The unauthorised painting of the external elevations of the dwelling in the vibrant and assertive shade used conflicts with policy HE9 of PPS5 in that it has a detrimental impact on the historic character of the building and creates a discordant element within the setting of neighbouring listed buildings and the conservation area and for which insufficient justification has been provided.