

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Rev Graham Wilkinson	Replace all existing timber and metal single glazed windows with UPVC double glazed units.  St Peters Community Centre, Rock Hill, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7LH	10.06.2019	19/00245/LBC

**This application was requested by the former Ward Member to be considered by Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated powers.**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That listed building consent be **Refused**

### **Consultations**

No formal consultations required

### **Public notifications**

One site notice was posted 14.03.19 and expired 07.04.19

One publication was posted in the Bromsgrove Standard on 11.03.19 and expired 01.04.19.

No representations have been received.

### **Relevant Policies**

#### **Bromsgrove District Plan**

BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment

#### **Others**

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

### **Relevant Planning History**

B/1999/0437	External alterations to proposed parish/community hall (amended by plans received 14.6.99).	Approved	28.06.1999
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### **Assessment of Proposal**

St Peters Community Centre is a building within the curtilage of Grade II listed St Peters Church, Rock Hill, Bromsgrove. The church was listed on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1995 and dates from 1858. The community centre is the former St Peter's RC First School and dates from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The building was substantially extended in 1886 by renowned local architect John Cotton and later extended by Sandy & Norris in 1931. It is of red brick with

simple blue brick cross motifs and with plain clay tile roof. The building is of a simple architecture with decorative features such as a bell turret, weathervane and gothic timber windows by John Cotton.

The community centre dates from before 1948, was in the same ownership of St Peters RC church at the date of listing, and has always been used for purposes ancillary to the listed church. The community centre is therefore within the curtilage of the principal listed building and is to be treated as part of the listed building.

The proposal is for the replacement of all 23no existing single glazed windows constructed of metal (17no), timber (4no) and uPVC (2no) with double glazed uPVC windows to the curtilage Listed Building. The existing doors are to be retained (as confirmed by the applicant in email dated 17.05.19).

The main issue to consider with this application are the impact on the special architectural and historic character of the curtilage listed building.

### **Principle of Development**

With reference to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

This is supported by Policy BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) which states that development affecting heritage assets, including alterations, should not have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance or significance of the heritage asset.

This policy accords with Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2019) which states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, Paragraph 194 states that any harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and Paragraph 196 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal.

### **Impact on the special architectural and historic character of the curtilage Listed Building**

The original windows are predominantly (17no) single glazed metal framed windows in various patterns with thin mullions, transoms, bead sections and integral glazing bars. Two large gothic style timber single glazed windows are located on the north and south elevations, also with thin mullions, transoms and integral glazing bars and central square opening light. There are 2no further timber single glazed windows on the north elevation, again with thin mullions, transoms and integral glazing bars. The windows are of different styles with various opening lights. I note that the building does have 2no uPVC dormer windows to the south elevation, however these do not benefit from listed building consent – the 1997 application for external alterations to the proposed parish/community hall indicated that the dormer windows were to be constructed of timber.

Metal and timber windows, naturally, require maintenance and this involves periodically re-decorating them which prolongs their longevity. It should be noted that as stated in paragraph 191 of the NPPF that where there is evidence of neglect of a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. Visits to the site confirm that the existing windows are in need of maintenance and some repair. However they are not beyond repair. The applicant has failed to explore alternative options such as repair, the addition of secondary glazing and like for like replacement. The loss of historic fabric is also of concern, as part of the windows significance derives from their evidential value.

The proposed replacement windows are 28mm uPVC double glazing units using the Duraflex system. The standard double glazing system comprises 2no 4mm panes of glass separated by a 20mm void filled with Argon gas, with the panes of glass held apart by perforated warm edge spacer. The principle of using uPVC windows in listed buildings is not normally acceptable as plastic sections tend to be bulky and the plastic has a machine-made smooth finish, very different from that of a timber or metal window, and therefore results in an alien and incongruous feature to the listed building. The joinery details proposed for this application are typical of standard uPVC units and therefore for the reasons outlined above would be an unsympathetic alteration to the special architectural and historic character of the listed building. Given the slim profile and proportions of the existing windows it is unlikely that this could be replicated in uPVC without significantly altering the overall appearance of the building. Therefore the principle of uPVC units would not be acceptable

The size of the frames are significantly larger than the existing and would reduce the area of glass within the windows giving them an uncharacteristically heavy appearance and an altered ratio of timber to glass. This would be particularly evident in the metal framed windows. It is proposed that the replacement glazing units would have applied (stick-on) 18mm 'Astrical faced Georgian' glazing bars. This would result in an incongruent appearance by reasons of the design of the bars which are not characteristic of the simple flat glazing bars.

The introduction of double glazed units would appear visually very different to single pane of glass in terms of its reflectivity of light and double register effect, which in turn would draw the eye to the unsympathetic change.

As mentioned above the existing windows are of varying styles and patterns; however joinery details have only been provided for 1no window, W16. The applicant has indicated that the proposed stick on glazing bars will follow the existing patterns of the window and that some of the opening lights may vary, however no joinery details have been provided at this stage. Whilst further joinery details could be conditioned, as the replacement of windows forms the basis of this application this information is intrinsic to the assessment of the proposed windows.

The applicant's aspirations for improving the air tightness and thermal performance, thus reducing heating costs, of the building are noted. It is considered that this does not necessitate removal of the existing windows. Weather stripping and draught proofing are visually more innocuous changes as well as thermally efficient and cost-effective. The aspirations for improved thermal insulation could therefore be achieved without adversely

affecting the external appearance. Secondary glazing in a removable inner frame is another acceptable option for some windows. Where windows are beyond repair they should be replaced with accurate copies which mirror the original in all respects; including materials, style, dimensions and opening directions of the historic window.

The applicant's financial argument regarding the cost of replacement metal and timber windows versus the cost of uPVC windows is noted. Again it is considered that this does not necessitate removal of all the existing windows. Repair of the windows would be of a lower cost. Whilst it is acknowledged that new metal and timber windows would be more expensive than uPVC this is not a planning matter and this therefore does not justify the harm that would arise through the replacement of the original windows.

The applicant has suggested that some public benefit would arise through keeping the building in use, by ways of allowing the cheaper uPVC windows; however a combination of repair of the existing windows through weather stripping and draught proofing would result in the same level of public benefit without harm. I therefore find that there would be insufficient public benefit to offset the identified harm.

## **Conclusion**

In summary by reason of its design, materials and construction the proposed alterations would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building. The proposals are therefore considered unacceptable and would fail to comply with BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan.

It is considered that the proposed works requiring listed building consent, namely the replacement windows, would fail to preserve the features, special architectural and historic interest of the building as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

In terms of the NPPF (Paragraph 196) the harm would be less than substantial harm, for which the NPPF states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal; from the information submitted to date it is unlikely that any true public benefits would arise from this scheme, only private benefits to the owners of the community centre through ways of reduced heating costs. It is also considered that clear and convincing justification of the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset has not been provided.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That listed building consent be **Refused**

## **Reasons for Refusal**

1. By reason of its design, materials and construction the proposed alterations would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II curtilage listed building as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further to this the proposed alterations would be contrary to policies BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the guidance within the NPPF and NPPG.

19/00245/LBC

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